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SCIENCE FICTION ARTIST IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Digital Art LIVE

THE CLOTHES ISSUE

KIM SCHNEIDER ('ARKI')

JEPE

MELISSA MORAITIS

ISSUE TWENTY
JULY 2017

VUE • TERRAGEN • POSER • DAZ STUDIO • REAL-TIME 3D • 2D DIGITAL PAINTING • 2D/3D COMBINATIONS

DAZ STUDIO & POSER

HOW TO CREATE OUTSTANDING SKIN ART

by Esther Mann

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OUTSTANDING SKIN ART

DETAILS

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Have you considered mastering the creation of skin art to enhance a character?

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For DAZ Studio and Poser Users

Date, Time and Duration

Saturday 15th of July at 21:00 BST (London), 12:00 PDT (Los Angeles), 15:00 EDT (New York)

1.5 hours+

Presented by Esther Mann

"It all starts with my deep and abiding love of comics and comic book art. It's an obsession that started in childhood with an uncle's 100 volume collection of Classic Illustrated comic books.

I was raised by a muralist father and can remember painting large backdrop sets, landscapes and scenes for an amazing number of years. Of all the subjects we painted I found and still find, humans and the human figure to be the most fascinating.
These loves (the human figure and comic book styles) eventually led me to 3D art, a natural extension of this interest. I started with Poser and when Daz Studio was released that became my software of choice. As I browse through my runtime, I realize I've been producing art using 3D models since 2003, and I see a copy of Photoshop 6 sitting here on my shelf as well. Apparently I've been at this a while, and yet 3D art is still in it's infancy as an art form. It is so very exciting to see where it goes as it evolves.

I've sold art at Comicons, been commissioned for paintings, worked on book illustrations, and have a website for book covers. It's awesome and so much fun! I love learning. I love art. I love the 3D art style. Together I find them to be an incredible amount of fun, there's not much I like doing more than meeting other artists, and exchanging ideas, tips, and tricks. It is definitely my idea of a good time!"

POSER

PBR EMULATOR

OUTSTANDING TEXTURES FOR FIREFLY

By Martin Gehrke from ByteFactory3D

Live Webinar Includes HD Recording

POSER PBR EMULATOR

DETAILS

How to use stunning PBR textures for renders in Poser FIREFLY

with the PBR-EMUALTOR Poser plugin.

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NOTE PBR EMULATOR PLUGIN IS NOW ON SALE AT RENDEROSITY!

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20:00 BST (London)/12:00 PDT (Los Angeles)/15:00 EDT (New York)

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Are you a Poser artist wanting to see more realistic textures in your renders?

Are you a Poser Content Creator wanting to make a drastic reduction in time and workload for texture creation and application?

In this webinar you'll learn:-

- How to use modern 'Next Generation' content with PBR textures in FIREFLY for Poser 9+
- How to use create and use HYBRID materials which work in FIREFLY or SUPERFLY (Poser 11)
- Automatic application – no manual adjustment in the material room.
- How to easily use hyper realistic PBR textures with detailing like scratches, dust and surface roughness.
- How to leave behind complex, node-driven and intensive manual adjustments for textures.
- Reduction in material zones in their props and figures.
- How to save time and workload in texturing if you are a content creator.

Expected duration : 1.5+ hours

By Martin Gehrke

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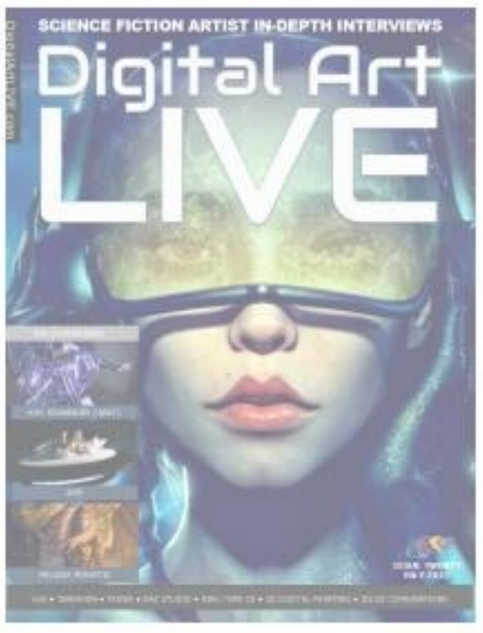
We are actively looking for artists or content creators that would enjoy the opportunity of teaching other artists in a live setting.

Would you like to work with Digital Art Live as a partner in presenting some of our live webinars? We're particularly looking for artists and content creators with DAZ Studio and/or Poser in mind.

Use the link below to submit your application and we'll get in touch!

https://digitalartlive.com/presenters

Past and Present Presenters : Syyd Raven, Eric Van Dycke, Paolo Ciccone, Kim Schneider, Charles Taylor.



Front Cover: "Gimmiemore" (2017), by Melissia Moraitis (BlackTalon Arts) — and featuring her character Morgan.

THE 'DIGITAL CLOTHES' ISSUE

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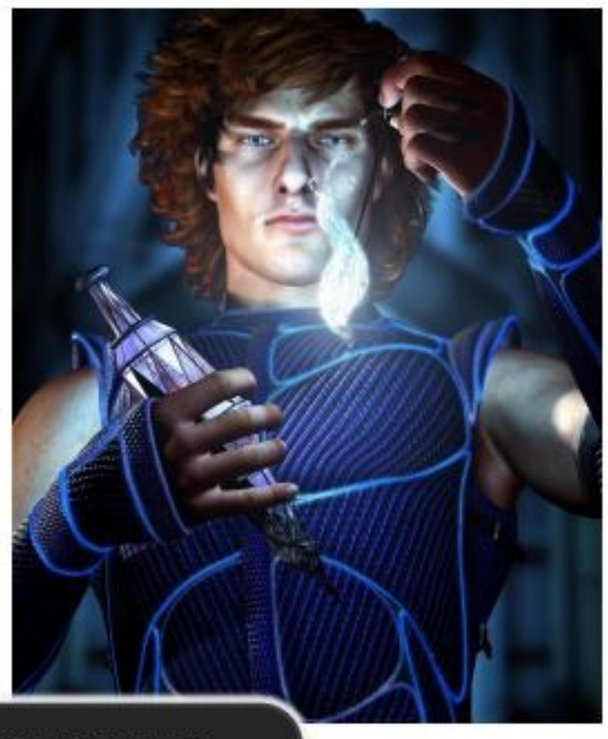

INTERVIEWS

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KIM SCHNEIDER ('ARKI')

Kim is one of the leading makers of digital clothes, and has been working with Digital Art Live on a large series of webinars.

DAZ STUDIO | PS

"... I would have been lost without the community. And even now I have questions to ask. When I have technical difficulties, or there is a new plugin, a new tool, new software, I can just go there and say: "Listen, can I ask you...?""

—— 32

MELISSA MORAITIS

Melissa ('BlackTalonArts') exemplifies the 3D artists who put digital clothes to good use, in superb renders and compositions.

DAZ STUDIO | PS

"Who doesn't love dragons? Love them! While fierce and deadly, there is something very magical/mystical about dragons. I tend to view them as protectors, not as servants or beasts to be slain."

—— 62

JEPE

Jepe has been developing 3D store content since the first days of Poser, and has a range of best-selling 'digital cloth'.

DAZ STUDIO | PS

"... My Body Jewels [content store pack] is a 'second skin' geometry layer based on transparency and high resolution displacement maps, which can take every possible shader [in either DAZ or Poser]."

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Credits for pictures, from top left: detail from "LG V4 suite" by Arki; detail from "E2AnnunakiBlue04" by Jepe; "View from above" by Troy Menke (see this issue's Gallery for full version).

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EDITOR'S LETTER

WELCOME...

This issue we explore the design and creation of clothing content for 3D characters with three different artists. We're also featuring a review on Marvelous Designer 6.5, software that is highly regarded as part of the workflow for creating clothing content.

Over 20 years ago, there was no such market for creating virtual clothing for virtual characters. Today tens of thousands of clothing items and props have been generated for both Poser and DAZ Studio figures. The art of creating digital clothing is not an easy task, requiring creative and technical mindsets in parallel and going through a great deal of steps to an eventual product. On top of that there's a business layer of thinking needed, if you want to break into this busy market with an eye to making money; to perceive what type of clothing sells and what might be trending.

You may pick up on some tips from reading our interviews and exploring what possibilities you could bring to the table. The best quality of all as an artist is pure persistence. Having a constant determination to experiment, fail as quickly as possible, learn from your mistakes and other artists, try again and sometimes succeeding will lead to a portfolio that you can be proud of.

With our review on Marvelous Designer, you'll discover that you can create beautiful 3D virtual clothing with this design software. There are tools that enhance quality while saving you time. It can be used to create basic shirts to intricately pleated dresses and rugged uniforms. Replications can take place of fabric textures and consider physical properties of the clothing. Detailing down to the last button, fold, and accessory can be generated. Draping garments onto 3D forms in real time is one of my favourite aspects of the software.

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KIM 'ARKI' SCHNEIDER

The *Digital Art Live* podcast editor Seaghan Hancocks talks with **Kim Schneider** ('Arki') about the pains and joys of making and selling digital clothing

DAL: Welcome Kim. You've just completed a series of complex clothing live webinars with Digital Art Live, which are now available at the DAZ store. And I, for one who attended all the webinars, know that without your help and you pointing out the 'tripping up points', I would have been lost. I would have been pulling my hair out, and I have little enough left!

Kim: Well, that's good to hear that I could help!

DAL: I wanted to start with a question that I find most interesting of all 3D artists, and that...you know, what promoted you to get into using the computer to create art?

Kim: Well, it was something that's bit depressing for an illustrator to confess. Which is that... I am not very good at perspective and anatomy. But that was before I got my bachelor's degree in Illustration, so that's my alibi. But when I got into 3D, it was mainly because I had figured out that I could pose all these human models and then use them as templates for my paper art work, for my paper illustrations. So that was the main reason why I first opened up a copy of Poser 4.

DAL: Wow! So that must have been, what, 2008 I guess, something like that?

Kim: It must have been around 2001, or a bit earlier.

DAL: So almost 20 years?

Kim: Well, 13, 14... 15 years. I tend to think like it was a long, long time ago, almost "in a galaxy far, far away". In a definitely different galaxy from ours, because it was the Poser galaxy, and today I'm in the DAZ Studio galaxy.

DAL: Do you find that there's much change and difference between the two?

Picture: "Water Rose".

KIM SCHNEIDER

GERMANY

CONTENT CREATOR | DAZ STUDIO

WEB

Kim: Not in the basics, how both programs work and how your technical or artistic approach is on the surface. But when you go in deeper in terms of production, there's a lot of difference, especially these days. So I think they grew apart over the years, in how the render engines, the materials and how the setup and rigging works.

DAL: So you got better at perspective after your Illustration degree?

Kim: A little bit better, and I'm not that focused on big sceneries anymore, so I think I'm trying to avoid perspective. But what I'm still using these days is anatomy and sketching poses so that they are correctly done, and using the references from my work when I'm sketching or doing one of my illustrations.

DAL: Do you think to be a successful modeller, it's necessary to have a formal training?

Kim: I think it helps. When I got my degree, I had a little bit more experience in Cinema 4D, which I hadn't touched before that because I was still using Hexagon and had some Maya experience. Formal training I think helps 'school your eye' to see what's not right. Maybe also helps 'build your attitude', so to speak, your work discipline, how to 'do the thing'. When not to give up and when to realize that you should start over with a project, or maybe abandon it or put it back for awhile and start another one. I definitely handle projects and work differently, since I graduated.

DAL: Any tips on how to keep a project in check?

Kim: Well, what they taught us during training was first get your project outline ready. To get an overview of what you want to do. And before that, I just started modelling and projects got bigger and bigger and bigger and got slightly out of control. So maybe it helped me a little bit to limit the scope of what I am going to do. I still do very big projects, but I have more of an idea where I'm going to go, and that starts with "I'm sketching my idea", so I already know "This is going to work and this is going to be almost impossible, so better not do this," or what approach to use to make it work. So that's something that definitely changed, less frustration because I already know where I am going.

DAL: So I'm curious. You said a bigger project that got bigger and bigger. So that's not physically...size wise, that's number of people in it or number of elements within a scene?

Kim: Number of elements, number of textures for clothing piece or just the number of assets I'm going to stuff into a project. I remember one of my very first projects was a combined character and props outfit, and the props outfit was freebie. It started with the outfit, then I modeled a room and a throne. And before I knew it I was working with full-blown environments, plus outfit, plus character, when I just wanted to sell the character! So that was a very good example. And I was pretty new at modelling, so I thought 'the quality isn't that great', so maybe you should just offer this as a freebie. And I think secretly my testers thought I was completely crazy to put this out there as a freebie, bonus freebie for the character. It was good practice, but it also... yes, I think I had to recover for almost a month before I could do anything else after this monster, so that was the wrong way to do it.

DAL: Good to know. If you think it's good enough to sell, then try and sell it... I guess.

Kim: Maybe if you're not sure, you should offer it as a bonus freebie, because I know that's one of the ways people who are new to modelling tend to approach this. They test if the customers will just download the freebie and then not use them, or see how the feedback goes. So that was my sort of calibration, in terms of: should even bother with the idea of modelling?

DAL: Okay. I've read your earlier work was with pen-and-paper tabletop gaming?

Kim: My job mostly was to do illustrations for supplements and very specialized illustrations called gaming hand-outs, which could look like page of a journal entry or a personal letter. Or maybe a postworked photograph of something, which made it look like a sculpture from a museum, showing a specific creature. Or I did floor plans and maps of buildings and areas for gaming, for orientation for the players, where they were going, how things looked like from above, from the air, or how a house looked from the inside. So with all the details, with all the furniture, all the rags and even the pictures on the wall, and even with the beds when a text description says it's an unmade bed, so it's an unmade bed and so on.

DAL: Helping the person playing the game, to be immersed in the game-world?

Kim: Yes, exactly.

DAL: Have you thought of creating your own game?

Kim: Yes. In fact it's two of them, but one is part of the smaller game I have already completed.

Picture: Promo for “Totem: The Owls › outfit for M4”.

It's part of the bigger one. But I had to pause this, because it's so much material to work with, and I've been working on this thing for more than 20 years. So it's time to take a break, take a step back to revise and look what's going to happen to this thing.

DAL: Can I ask a little bit about what the premise is or what the role is like?

Kim: It's a bit hard to describe. The bigger one is called Kinthara and is a mixture of high fantasy and the modern day in our world, and the two sort of merge during the game. I think the focus is mostly on character development, because I tend to prefer the storytelling approach in role-playing. So focus on the individual character is where does the character come from, the personal history, why does the character do things the way he or she does and where is the character going and why. It's very psychological.

DAL: I want to play it, now.

Kim: That's going to be a bit difficult.

DAL: Let's turn to clothing now. Well, I think your models are great, and I love them. I've taken a look at your portfolio of clothing, and a lot of them seem to have similar underlying themes. They're either scaled like a dragon, or they could have loose parts that tend to fly or move a lot in the wind, and look almost filmy. I'm curious where you get your inspiration for these.

Kim: Well, I would say 90% of the inspiration is my role-playing world. Which requires clothing for either a specific character I have in mind, or for a story or a culture. And the rest of the 10% is just me sitting down in front of the TV with my Netflix subscription and doodling, and then looking down and, "Oh! This looks nice. I think I could model this tomorrow."

DAL: So basically what you're doing, is you're doing all the illustrations for your game that you're going to come up with that you've been working on for 20 years, before you release the game. Is that right?

Kim: I'm not really sure. I'll have to think about this.

DAL: How critical is it to understand how something works in order to be able to model it properly?

Pictures: Initial sketch showing a combination of Arki's NQ Suit and Gown; and "Summer Night 02" to be found in the NightQueen Wardrobe Collection.

For example, you and I talked a bit before about modelling a weapon, and you said that you have no interest in it because you have no working knowledge of it. So how critical do you think it is to understand how something works to be able to model it properly?

Kim: Well, if I think of a current project I'm working on, it's a dragon skeleton and I had to do huge amount of research about animal and human skeletons before I could do that. So you have to learn how to model a joint, what kind of joint is used in an elbow or a knee or a wrist. So those are three types of joints already. Or the shoulder, that's another joint there.

So if you don't understand this and don't know how the shape defines functionality, you are probably not going to have a very good time or a fun time modelling that thing. So at least it's true for me, first I have to know what I'm doing, first I have to understand what I'm doing before I can put it into 3D, or model it in clay for that matter, which is very similar in the process.

DAL: Do you model in clay much to get inspiration or to flesh out ideas, I guess?

Kim: I used to. It's very messy. Takes up a lot of space and you have to fire the clay. So I don't do it anymore, but I hope when I get into ZBrush a little bit more, I will be able to do some more sculpting without the mess and the firing.

DAL: I had never thought of the human skeleton in that way, that there are, you know, a fixed number of joints that move in a fixed direction, and depending on any fantastical creature that you're going to build, you have to understand how all of the different joints come together. And I'm assuming, just extrapolating on that, you have to understand the different kinds of muscles and the connection points to the bones in order to 'flesh out', if you will, the figure as well, right?

Kim: Yes, exactly, because what I'm doing right now with the dragon skeleton is... the starting point was a sketch of one of my dragon species for my game, and I used the silhouette to model the skeleton. What I was doing that I already noticed I think the proportions are off, it's not going to work the way I thought it would. So maybe when I have a lot of time, I'm going to add muscle and maybe internal organs and model the outside skin and see how that looks. It's going to be close to my initial design, but slightly different. So I will sort of reverse engineer my own species, so it's going to be interesting.

DAL: That is interesting, and that's also an interesting way to think about it, because I've struggled with anatomy myself. I never got the opportunity to learn it formally. I watched my son go through art college and get quite good at it, and he was constantly saying to me: "Dad, you have to understand how the muscles work. If you don't understand how the muscles work, you can't make something properly." So, you know, picked up a couple of books on anatomy, tried to read them, never understood it and went back to just trying to figure it out. But yeah, so I guess what you're going to do then is you have an idea in your mind, what you want your dragon to look like, you know the bones that need to be in the correct position, but the sizes of the bones will be dictated by the skin of the dragon I guess.

Kim: It's more the reverse kind, because I have a lot of sketches and drawings of that species. So I had to update these sketches to my current skill set, make all these schematics for the modelling, then put the bones inside and see how they match with the proportions, which was interesting, and already found out that I think joints are often everything. The number of vertebrates isn't what I envision them to be, and the neck is too short or too long, the tail is too long. It was a real mix-up, so I think I took more than two years to model the skeleton. Now it's finally finished, and that's going to be very interesting journey...

DAL: I love dragons.

Kim: ... yes, me too. My favourite fantasy creature.

DAL: So, based on your understanding of how things work from the previous question, do you think that women are better at modelling female clothing?

Kim: That's so hard to say. I don't think so. I think there are men that are better at modelling female clothing or women are better at modelling male clothing. Maybe it's dictated by interest and how deeply they are immersed into this topic. I don't know. Maybe if someone has a background in sewing, they're better at modelling clothing. That's everything I can say about this.

DAL: That's interesting, that's going back to actually understanding how something is put together really.

Kim: Yes, and there is even software that works on this principle, called Marvelous Designer. You're more or less putting together your sewing patterns digitally, and can simulate how the fabric drapes and behaves, how it billows and how it should be tailored close to the body and how skirts should be shaped. So that's very, very different.

Picture: Promo for "LinkGear dynamic cape for Michael 4".

That's why I think I'm sort of cheating when I'm modelling my clothes. I have slight idea how to sew, but only at a very basic skill level. I think I could stitch on a button or something like that! So if someone asked me to convert my designs into a sewing pattern, I would say: "No, I have no idea how to do that, I'm sorry." But I'm pretty sure the things I'm modelling wouldn't work in real life.

DAL: When you texture for cloth or for clothes, is there anything that you look for, specifically for the texture itself? And, you know, this is a question that I have been struggling with, because I've seen different people, different artists do it different ways. If your model has folds in it, do you look for a texture image that already has the full shadows in it? Or do you look for something that's representative of the cloth and then let the model shape put the shadows in it? If you know what I mean. It's difficult to try and say, but I guess what I'm trying to say is, do you go out and take a picture... If we're doing a dress, do you go out and take a picture of a dress that has the folds in it that are in your model or close to what's in your model? Or do you just start with something that's...let's say, white cotton, and then let the shader presets and the shaders do it?

Kim: It depends on the detail of the clothing I have modelled, because when I have a model with lots of folds and detailing already inside, I think it doesn't really make so much sense to add fake shadows and highlights of folds. Maybe then the better way would be just to take a plain texture, and let the model do the rest with the appropriate materials.

On the other hand, when I have clothing with very low detail level, a full texture would help me to simulate the detailing, so it's balancing. Normally when I am sketching a new outfit, I already know

Pictures: Promos for "Totem: The Owls" store packs.

what the texture is going to look like. So very early on I decide what detail depth I'm going for, and then I already know which resource to pick from my library of resources for texturing. That's when I'm lucky. That's the ideal case.

DAL: So you mentioned your library of textures. Is it something that you've built up yourself or is it...? I know there are texture libraries. But personally, I've always been fascinated by textures, you know, how rough a stone is, what the side of a wall looks like. Do you collect your own textures or...?

Kim: In part. Sometimes I go out, take my own photographs when I can do this, and sometimes I buy resources. So it's a mix, yeah, but I have a growing library of textures from my own photographs.

DAL: And it's getting larger every year?

Kim: I would hope so, but I have gotten really lazy, I must confess. It's time for me to take another round of photographs.

DAL: What was the first item that you put up for sale? Do you remember?

Kim: I don't know. I believe one of the first was a texture for a horse skeleton.

DAL: Were you scared when you put it up?

Kim: Mm-hmm. I thought maybe it wouldn't be accepted and I thought no one would buy it, so I was really afraid. So the first sale was almost enough for me to throw a huge party.

DAL: For someone trying to sell their product, what's the best advice you can give them, or path for success or anything? And we already talked about freebies, that's a good way to get feedback. You have...?

Kim: Yes, I think freebies is the way to go when you're just toying with the idea of putting something up in the marketplace. First go for freebies and see what the community says. You could do something like offering the .zip to download at, let's say, DeviantArt and people can comment. And do that when you're specializing in modelling, then just polish your skills.

And then when you feel you've reached a certain point, when you could reach a quality standard that's normally seen in a shop like Renderosity or DAZ, then just go for it. Just try and submit, just try to get in there. I don't know what to say at this point. There are people who submit their first product, and they've never offered any freebies and they're successful. There are people who have offered dozens of freebies and they don't get accepted. It's different for everybody. You just have to try it. But personally I think the freebie approach helps to establish your name, to get known out there so you're not a complete newbie. Maybe that helps.

DAL: It has to give you a certain sense of... accomplishment is the wrong word. A certain sense of confidence I guess, you know, if you put something up and you get 30 or 40 people commenting they liked it, but they wish it was longer or shorter, the fonts don't work, or the texture is wrong or can't figure out how to work some of the morphs, or the morphs don't work on that character that they're putting it on I guess. So I mean if you... I suppose if you end up getting a lot of comments back, you know, most of them being positive: "Yeah, this is great. That's fantastic. I am so glad you have made it." I know it would boost my confidence.

Kim: Yes, that helps. And also you get used to certain kind of workflow. When you have done a couple of projects already for your freebies, you know what you're getting yourself into. So maybe that also helps you to make up your mind do you really want to do this, do this commercially, do you want to do this as first as a part-time job, maybe later as a full-time job. Think, "Really? Really? Yeah, you still want to do it? Yes? Then go for it."

DAL: Yes. I'm surprised at the number of steps in making content, and I was actually surprised at the number of snag points that you kind of ran into, like the hidden partial joint correction morphs that I had no idea about. And when you did your webinar on it and said: "Okay, so we're moving the leg here and it's not working. Why is it not working?" and then you said, "Okay, now let's take a look and see what partial joint correction morphs are active." It blew me away. It makes total sense in the 3D world, in terms of having a correction to fix something in the base model that's not working as well as it could. So it's a great concept, but I would have never thought about it. I would have never known it was there, unless I had listened to the webinars.

Kim: Yes. You know what they say, 'the pool deepens and widens the further you get in'. Although sometimes it becomes sort of a bottomless pit! I remember my first encounter I had with all these hidden joint correction morphs. That was back in the days of Victoria 4 and I was almost ready to just let it go, to just stop modelling clothing. I know I hated those elbow joints and thighs and knees and..."Oh my God! I have to make all these morphs to make this clothing fit and behave."

Then the first tools were published, which made the work a little bit easier by copying existing morphs into clothing, which DAZ Studio does automatically these days. But most of the tasks I had to do then were mostly done manually with external tools, which took a lot of time. So you see the huge amount of work DAZ Studio already does for you. As the content creator, it's really stunning. But still, there's the desperation.

DAL: I remember after that one webinar with partial joint correction morphs, you said: "Now, I'm not going to show you all the correction morphs that are here, because it's going to scare you." Right after that webinar, I went and I looked at them and I went: "Oh my goodness! Maybe I should model cars, there can't be *that* many problems in cars!"

Kim: Do robots. Do bicycles, do cars. No joint correction. Yes, so clothes are scaring. But then it's also a selection process. What do you want to support and what do you just ignore and say, well, we have something like smoothing and collision detection that also takes care of a few problems. You cannot really do everything, that's something that will come with experience.

DAL: In the test dress that I was working on the question was: "How do I know when to stop trying to fix it?" Because there are so many different combinations and permutations that you can get into. I sat there wondering, "I wonder if anybody is going to actually pose the character with their hands on their hips?" But of course they're going to do that one. But how about straight over her head or behind her back. Straight back, you know, behind your back, kind of a yoga pose. Who's going to do that? Probably not too many. So do I need to worry about that pose? So I guess… yeah, so learning to identify what you need to focus on.

Picture: Promo for "LinkGear dynamic cape for Victoria 4".

Like you already mentioned, you know... that you hate the elbows and the knees and, I'm guessing, shoulders. I'm not a bit fan of shoulders right now!

Kim: No. But maybe it helps when you look at clothing other merchants did and just take them apart, to learn. That was a big part of my own learning process. So I had my favourite vendors, 'the big names' I like to say. I bought clothing from them. We traded clothing, and then I just took a look how did they do things they did. Then it's just maybe even approaching them in person and saying: "Listen, I am working on this project here and I have run into those really big, big, big problem I cannot solve by myself. Can you perhaps point me into the right direction?" And I even had cases where I was told: "Listen, the rig I used for a skirt or a dress, you can just cannibalise that. Take that use that for your creation. You're going to modify this, and we'll see the next clothing of the same type you will do will use a better version of that rig. And if you do that a couple of times, that rig will be altered so many times, that it'll essentially become your own rig. So that's also a way to work. You're not alone in this. You're not the lone operator. You've got a community to ask.

DAL: That's interesting. I have tended not to be part of a community. Up until actually getting involved in these webinars, I've been working away on my own trying to solve problems. I mean, it's the way that I've always solved problems. But I find that that the camaraderie amongst the 3D artists in this area of content is amazing, frankly.

Kim: Yes, it is. A lot of people are willing to help you and almost no one will turn you down if you just ask. The only thing you could do wrong is to ask people to do it for you, because most people will just be able to tell that you don't want to learn. But if you show the willingness to learn, then no problem. I've never met anyone who would say no.

DAL: That's great, and it's a good environment. It's a great learning environment, I find.

Kim: Yes, definitely. I must say, I would have been lost without the community. And even now I have questions to ask. When I have technical difficulties or something isn't just working as I want it to, or there is a new plugin, a new tool, a new software, then I can just go there and say, "Listen, can I ask you…?" Then most people will say, "Sure," and then they would show me a video tutorial or just give me a useful tip and there we go.

Pictures: Promos for Gear Cybernet and AudioGear for Victoria 4 and Michael 4.

DAL: That's been great information, Kim. I want to thank you for your time. I know you're a very busy artist. Maybe this interview will inspire some budding artists out there to try their hands at some freebies.

Kim: Yes. I hope to see many more freebies and new merchants. And yes, you're welcome.

DAL: Thanks so much. Bye now.

Kim: Bye-bye!

Arki is online at:

http://aarki.deviantart.com/

Digital Art Live in association with Arki have just completed our most comprehensive series for Modelling Complex Clothing tutorials from start to finish — and the complete series is available online at the DAZ 3D Store

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Pictures: Promos for: Eagle-Guard Torso Armor and Kilt for Genesis 3 Female and Male; The Aquila Ensemble for Genesis 3 Female; and "EQ Freebie".

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Every new issue can be sent to your email address, simply by subscribing to our mailing-list...

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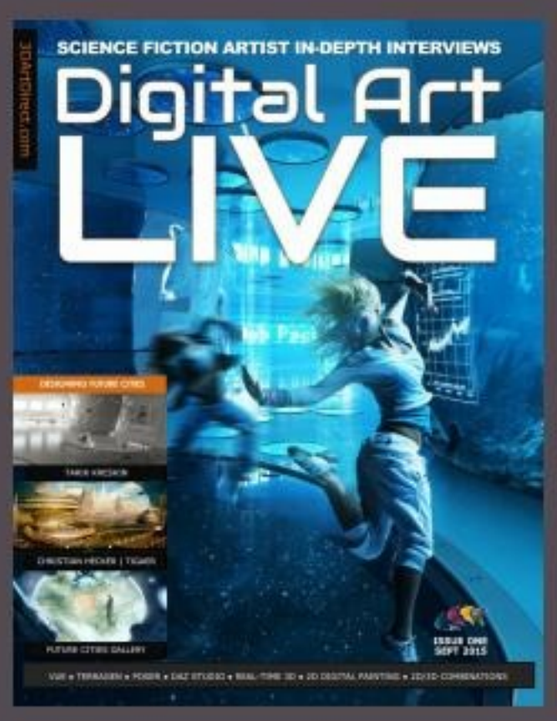

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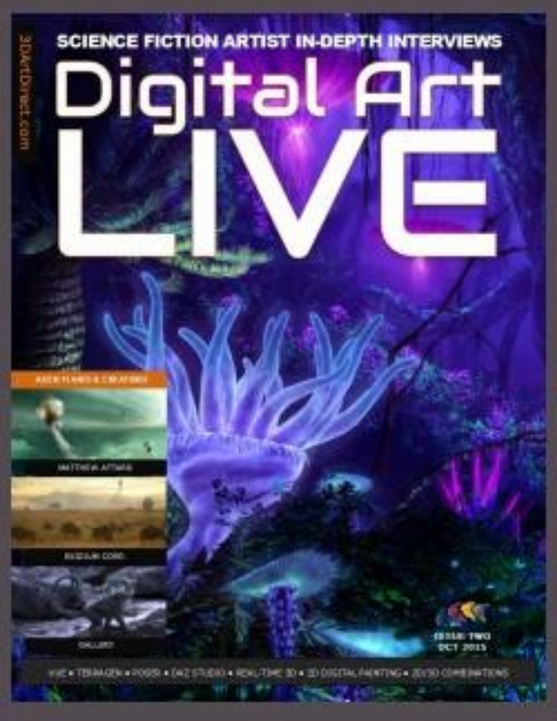

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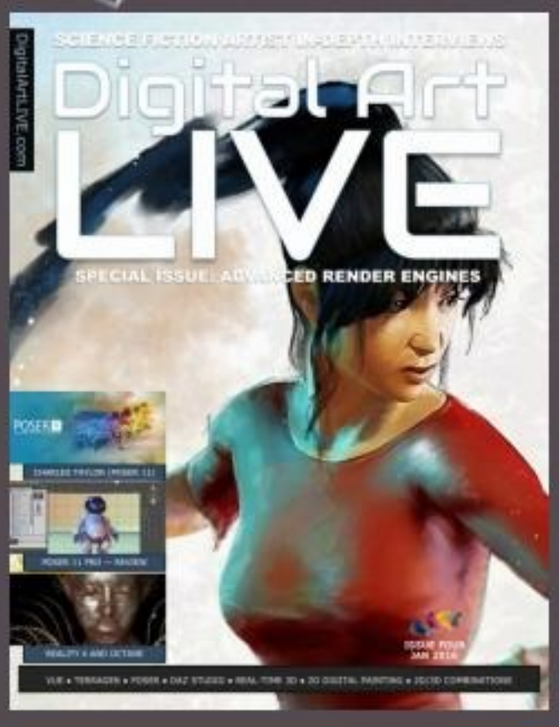

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https://digitalartlive.com/

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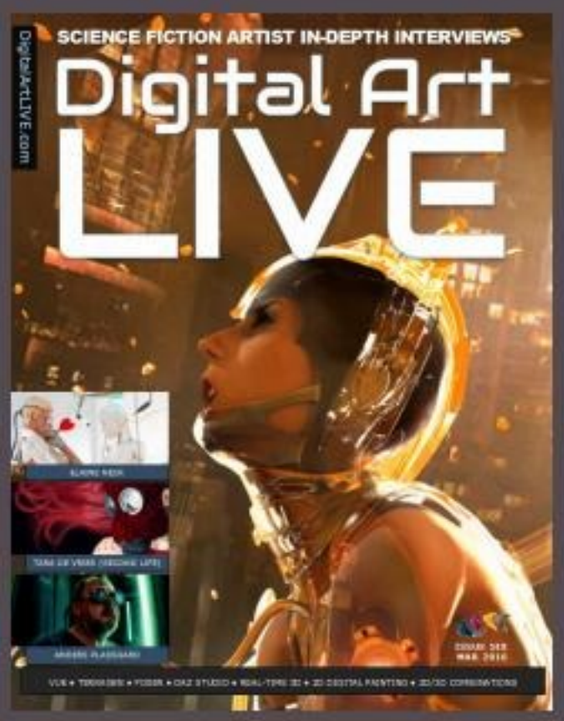

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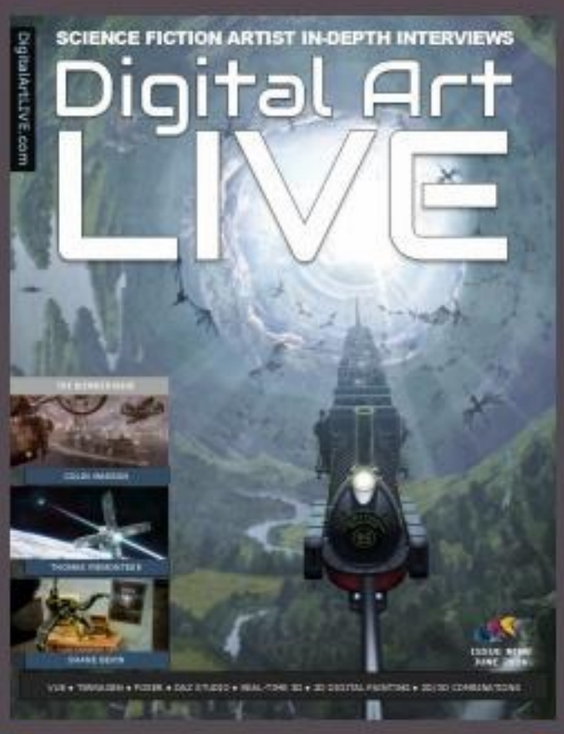

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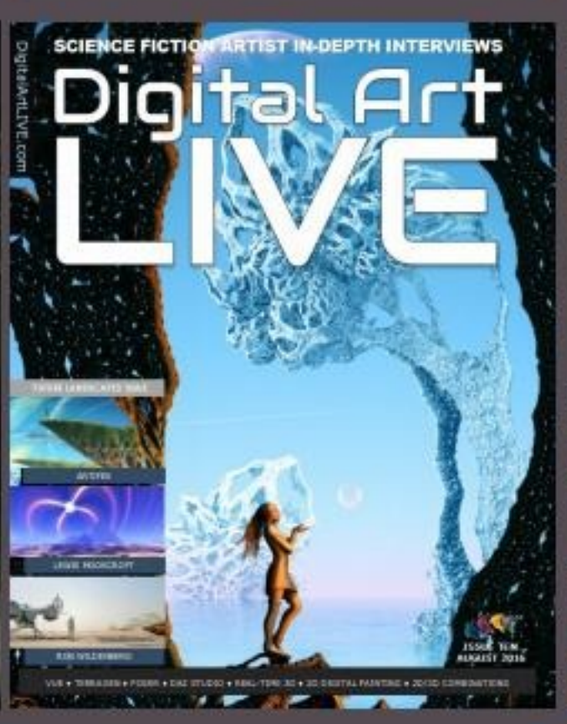

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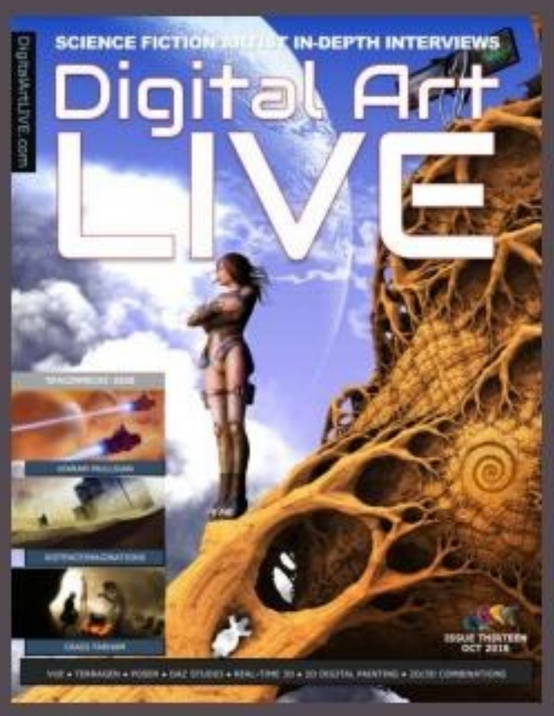

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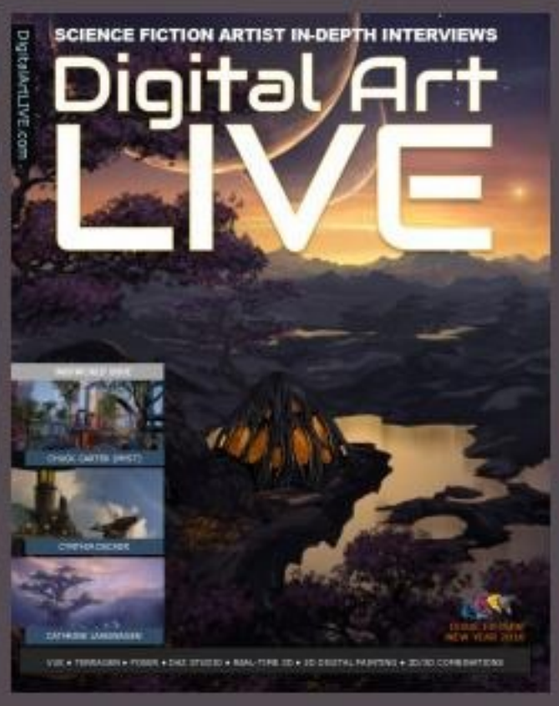

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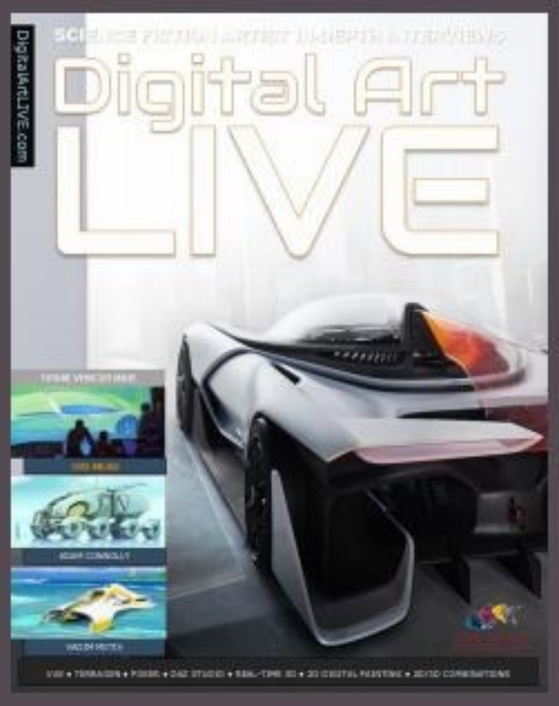

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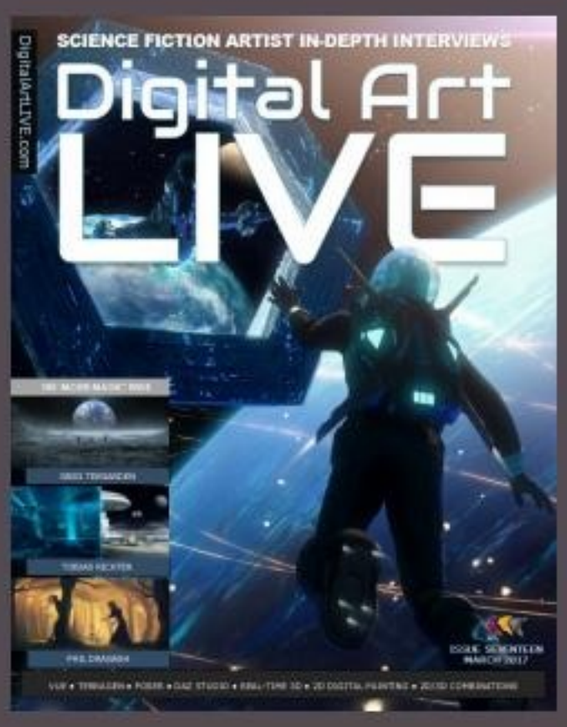
Interested in being interviewed in a future issue? Please send us the Web address of your gallery, and we'll visit!

paul@digitalartlive.com



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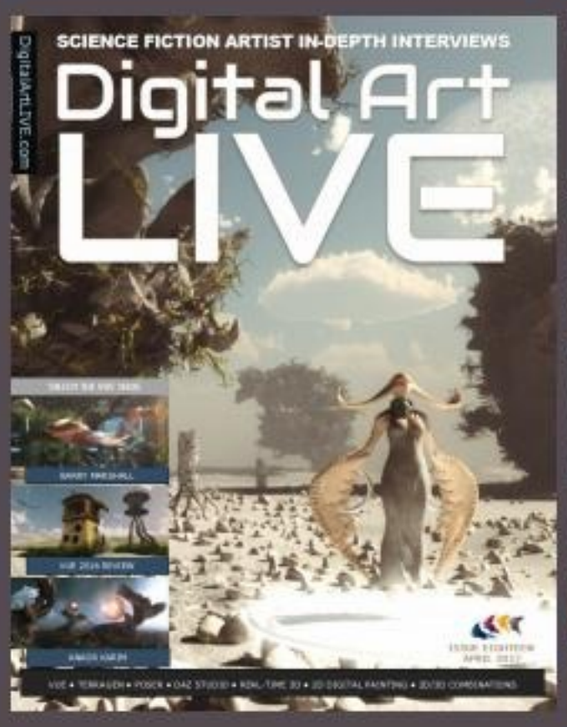

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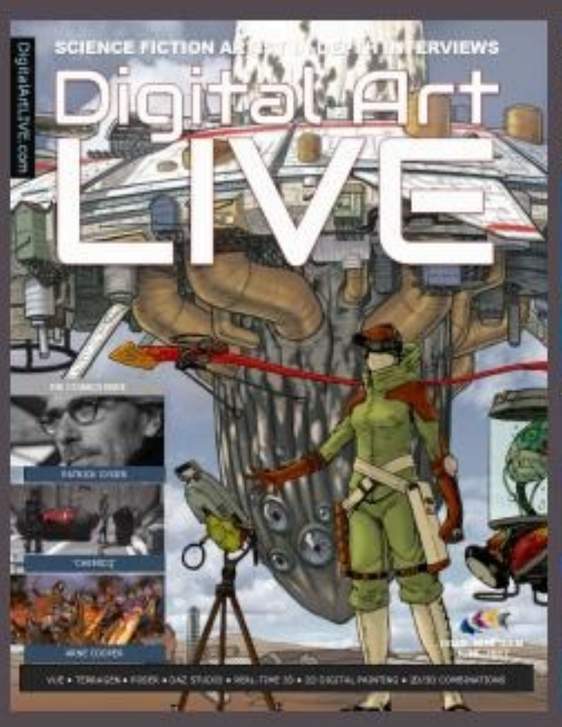

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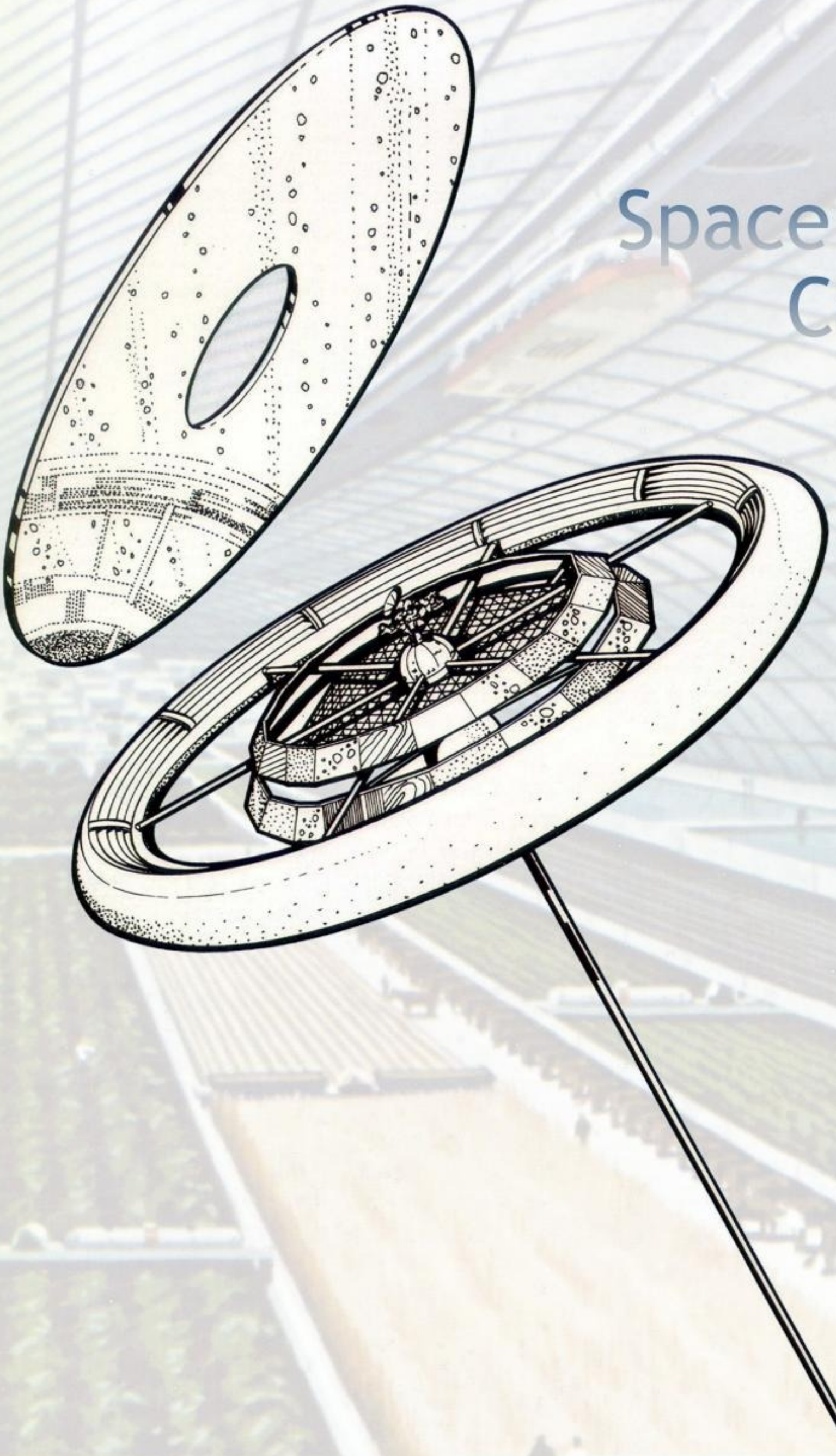

NASA has announced its 2018 Space Settlement Contest to depict permanent future human settlements in orbit.

The contest is open to young people from 7th to 12th grade (18 years old), either as private individuals or pairs or as school-class groups.

Colonies could be built using abundant materials mined from the Moon and asteroids, and solar panels would provide inexhaustible free power. Simulated gravity on the rotating settlement might be maintained at a slightly lower-then-Earth 0.9G or 0.8G, allowing people to live longer and more healthy lives. Such colonies can be a permanent home to thousands of people on the new frontier of space.

The 2018 deadline for entries will be **15th February 2018** — giving approximately six months from now, for the research and development of the entry.

https://settlement.arc.nasa.gov/

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3D CG ENVIRONMENT
COMPETITION 2017

DEADLINE: SEPT 30TH

VUE ARTIST: **OLEG S.**

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SCOTT BRISBANE
Lead Matte Painter (Weta Digital)

ERAN DINUR
VFX Supervisor (Brainstorm digital)

OLIVIER PRON
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MELISSA MORAITIS

Digital Art Live interviews **Melissa Moraitis ('BlackTalonArts')** about how she puts digital clothes to good use in superb renders and compositions, plus we talk about learning Zbrush and moving from Poser to DAZ Studio.

DAL: Hi Mel, many thanks for agreeing to an in-depth interview with Digital Art Live magazine. Welcome to our special 'digital clothes' issue.

MM: Nice meeting you, and thanks for having me here in the magazine.

DAL: Let's start with your early influences, before you started to explore 3D. What were the earliest 'things', creatively, which made an impact in your life? Comics, drawing?

MM: My older sister is definitely the one who inspired me to start drawing in the first place,

Picture:
"Isadora"

MELISSA MORAITIS

USA

DAZ STUDIO | POSER | ZBRUSH PHOTOSHOP

WEB

when I saw her draw for the first time. I was hooked and begged her to teach me, and it went from there. I used to sit on my bed and draw whatever I saw, freehand style, and just kept studying shapes/forms and distances between points. Mostly I drew horses.

Then as I got older I discovered Boris Vallejo and Frank Frazetta in the late 1970's. I loved how Vallejo portrayed women as strong, independent and able to hold their own ground, but in a beautiful way which I seemed drawn to immediately. Never the 'damsel in distress'.

I was also a big fan of comics, for example *Lady Death* and *Medieval Witchblade*. It was very telling how I was drawn to the fantasy genre instantly.

Drawing traditionally will forever be in my blood, and honestly there are times I've almost walked away from the 3D world to return to those roots. It's very therapeutic, even to this day. No "Ctrl Z's", of course, just an eraser that don't always undo the flubs.

DAL: Was there a teacher in your past, other than your sister?

MM: Yes, my art teacher in High School gave me the greatest inspiration. She saw something in me, that I didn't, and kept pushing my abilities and making me question everything and why. Of course that would annoy me to no end, but I know now why she did it. I still hold her quite dear to my heart, as she let me dream and be free to create whatever I wanted.

DAL: I see. Is that where your excellent sense of picture composition originated, do you think?

MM: I can attribute my lighting and composition skills to photography, I think, which I studied for years. It really helped me to understand light and the impact that composition can bring to any image, regardless of one's skill.

DAL: For that point in time, how did you approach getting into digital creativity from there? Was it 2D digital with Photoshop, and then on to the 3D? Or straight into 3D, and then adding 2D to try to get past some of 3D's limitations?

MM: Actually, it went from traditional straight into Poser, back around 2002/2003 when I joined a community called "3Dcommune". I was fascinated beyond belief. Not having much money, I started painting my clothes, hair, environments etc on top of the 3D model, in Photoshop 4. Then I actually started doing strictly digital painting from scratch, and I was really getting pretty decent at it. Unfortunately, I let online trolls destroy my confidence and I quit art all together from about 2005/2006. Until two years ago, when I came back. Of course, I don't let those type of things bother me anymore, but back then I felt like I was quite a bit more fragile when it came to my artwork. Since I was really trying to put my all of my love and passion into it. Now I mix the two genres. 3D and 2D digital painting, as it gives me the best of both worlds.

DAL: You mentioned Poser. Poser was your first 3D software? How did you first encounter Poser, and how did you grow with it?

MM: Yes indeed! If I recall correctly it was through the Internet searching for art communities, when I ran across "3Dcommune" and there I learned about Poser. It was like 'a kid in a candy store' and I will always have a great love of Poser because of it, although I don't use it any more… at this time.

DAL: What was your first 'breakthrough' digital picture with Poser? The first one you were really pleased with, and which brought you attention?

MM: That would be the original black and white "Talon" render, which I did back when Rune was released. Of course, I modified her through dial spinning in Poser and a bit of Zbrush. I honestly didn't think much of the render until she started getting tons of attention. I was a bit surprised to say the least.

DAL: I see. And that success obviously led to you making some superb fantasy and sci-fi pictures. Who have been your favourite content designers there, the ones you find you keep going back to, to help you make great pictures?

MM: Great question and it's so hard pick specific ones. The published artists really do such a great job at trying to deliver content which the masses want. Of course I'm heavily sci-fi and fantasy based, so I tend to lean towards the vendors who cater more to those genres. For example, ones that I continually buy from, as they not only deliver in content but quality include Stonemason for environments, as many would agree.

DAL: And clothing?

MM: When it comes to clothing that can be a bit tough, but some of my favourites are from Aeon Soul; Damage Inc.; ElorOnceDark; Arki; and Rhiannon.

Picture: "Dominion".

Plus there are now two 'new kids on the block'. Those are Strangefate and Daveyaboo. I'm really hoping to see more from them in the future. Especially more clothing content because I love about what they are creating, and their quality is outstanding. When it comes to characters/skins, I've learned very quickly who I'm drawn to. Not only in terms of uniqueness, but quality as well. That's Raiya, Kayleyess, Saiyaness and whoever created the Rune and Ophelia textures. There are so many I love, but I find myself always going back to theirs.

DAL: What's your favourite picture in your gallery, and why?

MM: Oh boy, that's a tough one. I think every image I create there is something I love about it and is 'my favourite in the moment'. But at this moment "Unbroken", "Talon Redux" and "Dirty lil Secrets" are my favourites. I felt I was being more true to myself than ever. Taking my traditional roots, photography and 3D knowledge combing it with subject matter — that will always be a part of my art in some form or another. Women of strength.

Pictures: "Unbroken"; "Talon 1 & 2". Zbrush.

DAL: Great. And then you upgraded to Poser 11. For instance, it was with a Poser 11 SuperFly picture that we featured you in our magazine, back in our Poser 11 special issue with your "Wastelander". Have you continued to use Poser 11, or have you found yourself slipping over to DAZ Studio in the last couple of years in order to more easily get at the Genesis 3 content?

MM: I was definitely one of the first adopters of Poser 11. It was difficult getting back into it, because the software had advanced *so* much. I almost felt like I needed to be a rocket scientist to understand how to get it to do what I needed it to do.

DAL: I didn't find it *that* bad. A bit of a re-re-learning curve, but then I don't use aspects such as the cloth or hair rooms.

MM: I started to think, once again, that pencil and paper might be so much more attractive... Ha! But all that aside, I no longer use Poser at this time. I loved the interface and how it handled most things I threw at it with ease, but the lack of acceptable base figures (in my opinion) is what drove me to give DAZ Studio a

"I bought Zbrush a couple of years ago because I wanted to start creating my own models from scratch. It appealed to me because it was like creating things from clay, a digital way of sculpting... working with one's hands."

try with the G3 base figures line. And that's where I remain to this day.

DAL: How easily did you learn DAZ Studio, back then? There was a sticky time, before the interface became more refined.

MM: I actually installed and uninstalled DAZ Studio several times as I absolutely hated it at first. Plus, it asked more of my system than Poser did. I've since then upgraded my machine so that's no longer an issue. Believe it or not, I liked the painterly feel of Poser compared to DAZ and at first didn't care for all the push to get more and more realistic renders.

DAL: Yes, Poser's Firefly can be quite painterly if you nudge it that direction and have the right models. I'm thinking of Ken's Songbird series, that sort of thing. Plus the Sketch render options, the PASS watercolour shaders. And now there's the fabulous Comic Book mode which nudges it again into more artistic renders. But ultra-realism is what many artists want in 3D… and so have DAZ Iray and Poser's SuperFly.

MM: I can't imagine what the advancements in realism will be like in a few more years. It's just crazy the realism that is being produced by the amazing artists out there.

DAL: Yes, realism in figures too, in terms of joint bending, skin and suchlike. Speaking of which, will you be using the new 'Genesis 8', in the latest DAZ Studio?

MM: Oooooh, touchy subject. /*Laughter*/ I haven't adopted Genesis 8 quite yet. I'm still not sure quite how I feel about it. Personally, I have a few G3 characters I worked quite hard on to get them where I wanted, and I'm very happy with them at this time. So 'why fix what isn't broken'? The only thing I can give G8 kudos for is the expressions. DAZ did an amazing job bringing them to this next line.

DAL: Yes, I also noticed that. They seem to interact with additional face muscles, where pulling on one muscle also tweaks others.

MM: I just wish that would have happened with G3. So, I won't say I'll never adopt G8 into the family. When something is released I feel 'I just got to have', then I'm sure it will happen.

DAL: Yes, it'll be interesting to see what we get in the next version number of DAZ Studio. They can't keep iterating 4.9.99999999.88999 etc forever, it's getting a bit silly. Now, you have obviously also put a great deal of time into your digital postwork, with very fine Photoshop work. I assume it's with Photoshop. The very impressive "Aesir DR from the ashes" for instance with the very characterful dragon. Tell us about the postwork process on a picture like that, please.

MM: Yes, I do use Photoshop exclusively! I've been using Photoshop since version 4. I actually still have the DVD!

DAL: Oooh… collectable!

MM: Ha! But yes, I *do* a great deal of painting, fixes, adjustments etc in Photoshop. However, I try to do it in a subtle way, a way that it's not so obvious — especially when dealing with Iray renders from DAZ Studio. If I 'go too painterly', it just wouldn't look right with that type of render. I treat it like a photograph and do the post processing in my digital darkroom. I could definitely do a lot more painting, as that's by far my favourite part, but I probably couldn't pull it off successfully. Knowing when to pull back and be more restrained is always a difficult choice and at times I fail.

As for "Aesir DR [Dragon Rider] from the ashes" (see picture, right)… the first thing I tried to nail down was the composition and lighting. If I had failed at that then no amount of later painting would have saved it. Both the hair and dragon took quite a bit of work in Photoshop. 3D objects don't always translate/cooperate when you're going for a natural flow or look. The Dragon had no Iray shaders and honestly looked very flat as a consequence. So, with some "Overlay" layers in Photoshop I started painting in shadows and light, trying to bring more depth to him but in a subtle way. As for the hair, it was simply using my favourite "soft brush" on a new Photoshop layer, matching the colour and ensuring I stayed with the flow of the hair and blended it in enough that it looked more natural. Hair is something that almost always requires painting when it comes to my tastes.

Picture: "Aesir, Dragon Rider — from the ashes".

DAL: Yes, and hairless characters can save a whole lot of render time too.

MM: As for the female figure, there's generally always touches of light that I add to the skin, eyes, lips and I accomplish this through a "Screen" layer in Photoshop. Just seems to really bring them to life and give them that needed impact.

DAL: And the clothing? Is there a need to fix that, generally?

MM: For the clothing I will generally 'amp up the highlights' via an "Overlay" layer, and really bring out those metals and colours. The ashes floating around were a last minute addition, which only required painting in the small strips/dots of red and yellow and then using the motion blur in the same direction her hair was blowing to give it that motion/ dynamics. Best choice I made. The last step, after fixes and painting, are general level adjustments to the colouring, whether that be bringing in subtle colours to the shadows, or to shift the overall colour balance overall.

DAL: So has that crystallised into a workflow for you?

MM: I don't necessarily have a set process, as it seems to change often. I just attack each part individually and get it to align with my vision.

DAL: I see. There are quite a few fine dragons in your pictures. And some characters — exogenesis T.I.N.T.E. (This is not the end) for instance — have a sort of dragon-scale like clothing? What is the attraction of dragons for you?

MM: Who doesn't love dragons? Love them! It would be amazing to incorporate more of them into my art. I also love reading books with dragons as the main focus. While fierce and deadly, there is something very magical/mystical about dragons. I have a tendency to view them as protectors, not as servants or beasts to be slain. They have always seemed to be wise beyond anything we could imagine and that wisdom is something we all could pay heed to. Maybe it's just my thing where all my characters whether beast, human or alien have a strength that is undeniable. Maybe it's what resides in my own head where I feel like I can conquer the world and then reality sets in! */Laughter/*

DAL: Have you also moved your talents into freelance work, such a book covers? I see you've done some excellent content store promos for 'Aarki' (aka 'Arki'), for instance? Tell us about your freelance work, please?

MM: At this time, I haven't done book covers. I still feel that I'm still learning so much and as such I'm not yet at the point where I would be comfortable doing more freelance work.

Picture: "Gimmiemore".

At present learning Zbrush and the likes, that takes up quite a bit of my time. It would be great if there were more hours in the day. The most I do is commission work for published artists like EM3D, Arki and Damage Inc. Although I've cut down quite a bit on my promo works, so that I can focus more on my own endeavours. But it's been a great pleasure working for those groups. EM3D is what I call my home, the whole group is full of great artists/people who love promoting the creations of Published Artists' Content. There's no pressure, no drama… just creation and community support.

In exchange for doing promotional type work, the PA gives us their latest product to showcase to the community, meaning showcasing the possibilities of it. It's always a great time to see what everyone's imagination comes up with, and always inspiring no matter what their skill level. I just love being around great people and artists who are passionate about what they do.

DAL: Fantastic. And you're now becoming a superb Zbrush character sculptor, and have been getting attention recently for female warrior sculpts such as "Talon Redux". You had an Artstation "Pick" and a DD at DeviantArt. Tell us about how and why you got into Zbrush sculpting, please?

MM: Maybe it's just a bit of social anxiety… because not only was I shocked with the "Pick" and "DD", I was deeply honoured. For me it was quite a big deal to be put among, artist who I consider the best. Yet at the same time I had the feeling like I didn't deserve to be there. It kind of freaked me out, as I didn't know how to deal with all the attention. It was like a double-edged sword for me.

As for digital sculpting, I bought Zbrush a couple of years ago because I wanted to start creating my own models from scratch. It appealed to me because it was like creating things from clay, a digital way of sculpting… working with one's hands. I think this is a common theme with me. The more it mimics something traditional, the more I'm attracted to it. Zbrush is obviously capable of *so much more* and that aspect of it, in itself, is quite intimidating. Besides my reading the monthly magazines I've also invested in some tutorials from well known Zbrushers to try and wrap my head around the process. I'm determined to become more proficient at it, and leap into creating my own content if nothing more than just for my own art.

DAL: Yes, it's something I have on the to-do list, eventually. Do you find there's much interface between DAZ/Poser content and Zbrush? I'm not yet a Zbrush user and so I look at things like very complex braided hair with wispy strands all sculpted up in Zbrush and think: "easier to import that as an .OBJ from pre-made/pre-posed Poser hair, surely?" Or can it all be easily 'sculpted up' inside Zbrush with the tools there?

MM: Zbrush is amazing in its capabilities. I'm not even close to being knowledgeable enough to give a full down lo regarding that particular subject, but from reading what other artist trials and tribulations are, it seems quite difficult at times going the other way. For instance, taking Zbrush sculpted hair to fibermesh for Daz or Poser could involve some pure hair-pulling episodes! It will be something I learn in the near future.

DAL: What version of Zbrush do you use, and what do you think of the new version which has just come out? 4r8 I think it is, now?

MM: Currently I'm still using 4r7. The only reason I haven't upgraded yet — it's a free upgrade — is I'm afraid it will mess up the connection with DAZ Studio and Zbrush through the use of GoZ. The new version looks amazing and honestly, I can't wait to upgrade. For me, it's fast becoming 'the one-stop shop'. Sculpting, polygon modelling, fibermesh, Boolean operations, new translate tool… I mean, *sheesh*, amazing! I have a whole slew of download videos lined up which demo the new features.

DAL: Yes, I've had a look at those. They've definitely bumped the software up my to-do-list.

MM: The greatest thing and one I give Pixologic even more respect for is that the upgrade is free!

Picture: “Moira”.

DAL: Yes, free is always nice. So what would be your ideal workflow, in terms of chaining different bits of software together to get to the final picture? Your 'dream workflow', if you like?

MM: My dream workflow? Hmmm… That most likely wouldn't include either DAZ Studio or Poser, if I'm creating my own custom figure, clothing, environments etc. So with that said, I'd have to say Photoshop first, for concept drawings (or even pencil/paper); then on to Zbrush for the actual creation; Substance Painter for texturing; an external renderer for final image; and then back to Photoshop for a little magic in bringing it to life. However, most likely I will still be using DAZ/Poser for quite some time and throwing that into the mix.

DAL: Are there new techniques, or even wholly new software, that you'd like to try out in future? I'm thinking Marvelous Designer, for clothes, for instance? We have an in-depth MD review in this issue. Or Vue 2016 for landscape? We also had an in-depth Vue review recently, so readers may want to check out both those reviews, and out in-depth Poser 11 review a while back.

MM: For software, yes, I'd love to get into Marvelous Designer, and what I've seen others creating with it is blowing my mind. Don't tempt me… as I'm trying to keep my hands out of too many things. /*Laughter*/ I used Vue in the past and absolutely loved it, creating whole worlds where anything is possible. However, at this time it's out of my budget and getting the latest Genesis figures in there and converting the textures is a right pain.

DAL: Yes, the Poser and V4/M4 interchange is excellent, all the textures get automatically tweaked. Perhaps 2D PNG alpha billboards of DAZ Studio Iray character renders would be the simplest way to the Genesis base figures and their clothing into a Vue scene. Not ideal in terms of how they take an Atmosphere, but fast.

MM: I would love to explore matte painting, where you can just about create anything and make it believable with the right skill. With my Photoshop experience it will make things easier, once I start educating myself in that way of working. I think that combining it with everything else could be something very special.

DAL: Yes, I guess that's the ultimate aim. To make a set of combinations were it all comes together: a graphic novel; a short animation; a sequential series of big *tableaux vivant* pictures, perhaps as a storybook; or a vast wall mural. What's your home studio setup like at present, and what's the view out of the window?

MM: I'm fortunate enough to have a whole room to myself. Believe me it's packed from wall-to-wall with art equipment. Besides my TV, I have two art studio desks where I try and keep all my traditional media in one place and if it's not there it's in my walk-in closet. Then there's my bookshelf where I've kept all my *ImagineFX* magazine issues, dating all the way back to the beginning. Other creative magazines as well. Then there are the books! I have quite the collection of art books that educate and inspire me. Ranging from "How to's" to my favourite artists such as Frazetta, Boris & Julie, Brom and the brilliant collections of the *Spectrum* volumes. I sadly admit that I rarely, if ever, look out my office window. I like my work area dark, and therefore have thick curtains to block the light.

DAL: Yes, that's often a requirement, just to see the screen properly! I tend to do that, especially in summer. And I often raise my eyebrows when I see photos of bright airy uber-offices at creative agencies, flooded by sunlight. How do they see the correct colours and the contrasts? It makes me suspect there's a crowd of palid Morlock-like artists/designers slaving away down in their dark basement somewhere!

DAL: /*laughter*/ We're starting to sound like vampires! In all seriousness though, if my window view was something other than other apartment buildings, then it would be a completely different scenario. A view of mountains or any form of nature would be ideal, but alas that is not my reality here.

DAL: Yes, I'm lucky in that respect. Stoke-on-Trent... but a vast sweep of a wooded ridge, up and down the valley, when I look out the window. Talking of Stoke-on-Trent: where's the weirdest place your art has ever taken you?

Picture: "Exogenesistinte".

MM: */laughter/* Not sure how to take or answer that? I will say this… the farther I go to that place 'deep down' (however you want to translate that) the better. It seems my most creative side comes from the darker more than the light. Like certain music will drive my creativity more. If I'm listening to happy music I rarely can do anything but faeries. */laughter/* It's interesting the older I get the more I'm realising the truth about where my creativity is driven from, and to share that would take more time and space than allowed.

DAL: Indeed. Yes, a lot of people say that translating one's fears into art can be a powerful motor for creativity. What fantasy and science fiction do you currently enjoy? Either visual or storytelling or both?

MM: Pretty much everything, except horror. I have an impressionable mind and watching any hardcore horror sci-fi or fantasy stays too long in my head. I can list everything, but again it would be too long. If it's fantasy or sci-fi then I'm all in. Whether it's from reading, movies or admiring the amazing artists out there that create in the same realm. One of my favourite authors is Branden Sanderson, he had me hooked with the book *Elantris*. Plus I'm a total *Game of Thrones* nut, but who isn't right?

DAL: Well… I've seen the first four? Series — but found it rather too talk-talk-talk in too many places. As such, I must say I've not yet got around to the lastest series. I'd love to see a "brisk fan-edit" once it's all complete — something which doesn't exist yet so far as I know — which would trim out all the padding.

MM: Besides science fiction, I love anything from the medieval times: Vikings; barbarians; dragons; Merlin… you name it! Oh and yes I'm a Trekkie fan and everything Dystopian. As you can see my range is broad, which is probably why I don't have a certain style or genre. I just go with whatever inspires me in the moment. Just generall not anything to do with reality.

DAL: Which digital artist communities do you use and recommend (on-line or off-line) and how have they helped your work?

MM: For me personally, if you want to grow as an artist — even though it's hellavabit intimidating — my first recommendation would be "Artstation". Such a pleasing site to look at! Not only do you have amazing artists for inspiration, but there are a ton of insights you can get from other artist who share their workflow or process. I try and take time to study all the art I'm drawn to, and how they accomplished it. There are quite a few that I would just love to be their shadow for one day to watch them.

The other place I've stayed with for 13 years now is DeviantArt. It's massive and so easy to get lost in the influx of art being posted. You can even request critiques that can give you insight and help you grow as an artist. As long as someone is not being mean, just to be mean then everyone's thoughts and opinions are valued. My suggestion though, is if you want to get more noticed, find groups which promote artists and showcase your work. It can feel lonely and at times deflating, but remember why you're doing it in the first place… passion and love. Everything else will fall into place in time.

DAL: Do you find you see much traction with sales of prints via DeviantArt? It's something I've thought about recently, as I daresay many of our readers have, but I'd be unsure if it was worth it. I'd also worry a little about the quality of what gets delivered. How do you find it, in terms of sales and quality?

MM: This, I've been quite disappointed in. I haven't sold one print personally, except to myself. Ha! I had "Caress of Steel" printed poster size and was actually quite pleased with the shipping and quality. I think why I'm not getting the sales is I'm an artist trying to sell to other artists.

DAL: I see. Yes, I guess ideally one wants a larger public, in terms of getting sales.

MM: I may look for a printing service that focus on selling prints to art collectors/lovers who aren't artists themselves. Not sure if that would make any difference whatsoever. I will be having "Unbroken", "Talon Redux", "Dirty lil Secret", "Talon II" and "Moira" printed and hoping that the quality stays good across the

Picture: "Stormcaller".

board. I definitely think it's worth the effort for any artist to put themselves out there. You just never know what will happen. What's it going to hurt right?

DAL: Yes, with print-on-demand it's not like you'll be stuck with 500 copies in boxes in a cupboard. Someone commented about you recently "It's so rare to run across longtime DeviantArt members who are still active." What's the secret of your longevity there, would you say?

MM: There's no secret, really. It remained largely unused for many years, when I took my break. In fact it wasn't always known as BlackTalonArts. When I first started back at the beginning it was "DrmzRmyne" which some of the long time artists may or may not recognize. I stayed because I liked the tools, interface and journal features. It was my own personal corner in cyberspace. But now, I've got myself wanting to permanently move to "Artstation", because I love everything about it. Very slick.

DAL: Yes, I wonder if the new owners of DeviantArt will dare to change the UI, more ArtStation-usque? And are there tips that you could you give your fellow artists, about how to avoid burnout?

MM: Tips to avoid burnout? Wow, am I overly familiar with that! It's something I'm learning to deal with myself, as I know so many others that deal with the very same issue. I can honestly say the best way, one I'm learning, is to make sure you give time to yourself to create and do what *you* want. Don't go full force without taking small breaks. Also, get out in the real world and experience nature, friends, family, read and so forth. It really helps recharge the creative process.

"Tips to avoid burnout? Wow, am I overly familiar with that! ... get out in the real world and experience nature, friends, family, read and so forth. It really helps recharge the creative process."
GRIMOIRE
GRIMOIRE

It seems I get my best ideas when not at my desk. Oh... and never force anything, it only seems to get worse if you do. I've learned to walk away when that happens. That's huge, learning to walk away. I think we all have that tendency to 'try and push through it' and it shows in our work. My most popular images were when I was trying the least. Go figure. It shocked the heck out of me too, but it's a learning lesson, as is every roadblock. It's all in how we handle the situation in whether we grow, or stay rooted to the same routine.

Picture: "Fallen".

DAL: Super, great advice. Well, thanks so much for this in-depth interview. We appreciate that you've had to wait a week or so past the promised date for our questions, but we're glad to have finally got it sorted out for you!

MM: Thank you so much! It's been a great experience and honour. One that was worth the wait!

Melissa Moraitis is online at:

http://blacktalonarts.deviantart.com/

MD 6.5

Verica Hupe ('VAlzheimer') reviews the latest version of the versatile 3D clothing creator software **Marvelous Designer**, for *Digital Art Live* magazine. Verica is a 3D Artist, Daz 3D Published Artist and a 3D Content Creator.

Marvelous Designer 6.5 ('MD') is the latest version of the most popular tool for creating 3D clothes and garments. Marvelous Designer specializes in creation of 3D clothing with realistic draping, as well as interior cloth such as bedding, curtains, and literally any type of cloth that can move in 3D space. MD outputs content which can be used in various 3D applications, in industries such as gaming, fashion design and the film industry. The software is oriented to both beginners and professionals, and has strong community support in its ongoing development. I have been a user since Marvelous Designer 4. Marvelous Designer's popularity is quite justified, both by the affordability of its individual licenses, and also by the ease of use and constant development by the makers CLO Virtual Fashion.

Cost:

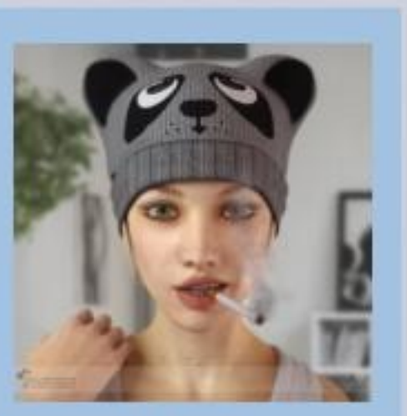
Admittedly, the enterprise licensing for bigger corporations does have a hefty price tag — from $1,700 to $6,000! But for individual users licenses are much more affordable, with monthly subscriptions currently at $59.99, leading into an annual subscription of $360 or a perpetual/non-expiring license at $550. It's important to note that users who take a subscription will get chunky discounts for upgrades, for instance a 75-85% discount for users of MD 4 and 5 who want to upgrade to MD 6.5.

As such it is very important to determine which plan suits you best, taking into consideration that MD usually updates annually and with major improvements of its functions. The best way for a new user to make their decision would be to take the free 30-days trial.

Getting started:

To start with Marvelous Designer, all that is needed is to make an account and download the free trial version. System requirements for

Picture: Development renders for Verica's 2017 'Cyber Street Wear'.
You can also see them in video at: Verica's YouTube channel.



VERICA HUPE

TEXAS, USA

MARVELOUS DESIGNER | DAZ STUDIO | ZBRUSH

WEB

running Marvelous Designer smoothly are Windows 7 to 10, and preferably 64-bit Windows, although it will be functional under 32-bit Windows. Upon installing and running MD for the first time, you will be prompted to log in to your account with your previously registered username and password, and that's about all you have to do to register your first version and start creating new 3D clothing.

The default interface is very friendly and self-explanatory. It consists of two basic windows, the 3D window, where simulation of the cloth is run; and the 2D window which offers a view similarly to that of vector programs. Here 2D sewing patterns are drawn by using Bezier curves and geometrical shapes and lines, and alongside this are the side menu for controls over the fabric and simulation. MD ships with two basic patterns for clothing included in the library, but more can be added as you build up your pattern library.

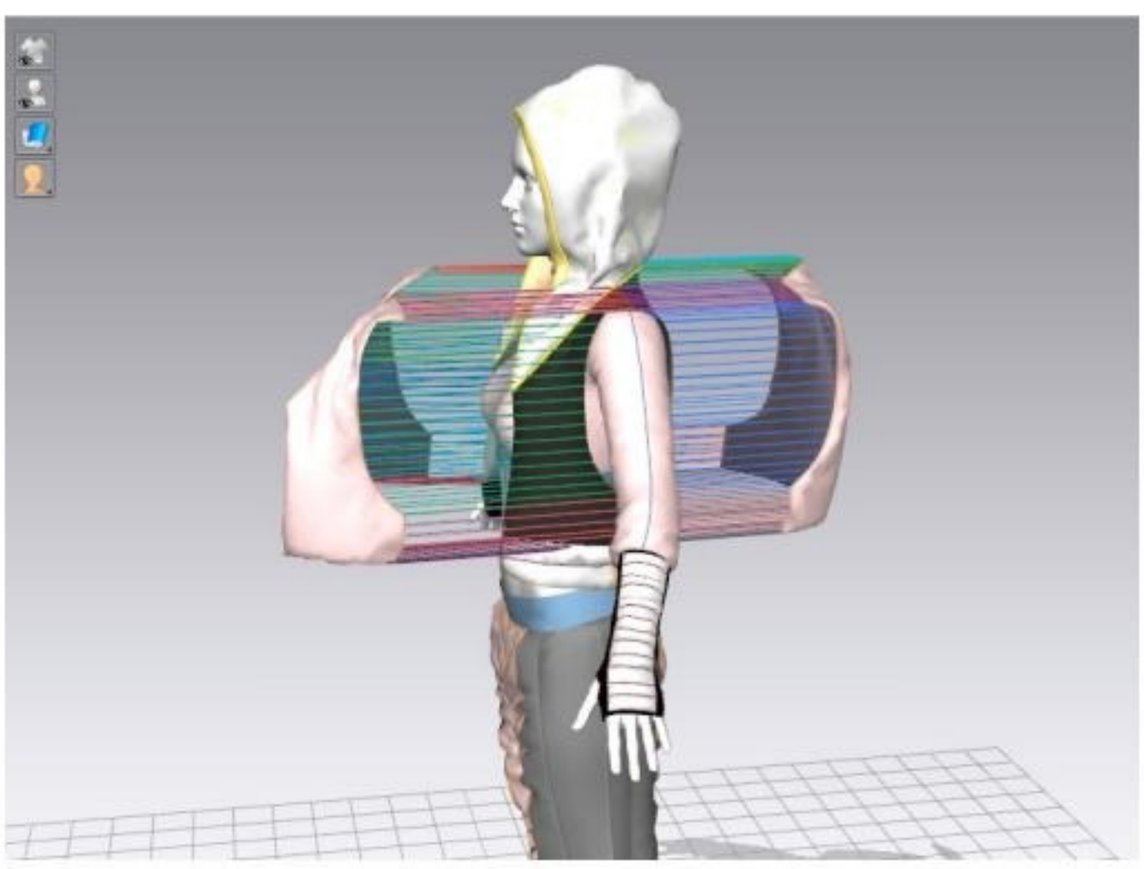
Marvelous Designer also comes with its own avatar collection including male, female and child avatars. But it is easy to import your own 3D models as avatars in popular formats such as .OBJ, Collada .DAE and .FBX, as well as simulating clothing through custom posing (morph targets) and animation imported as .FBX, Alembic or .MDD after the loading of the avatar.

3D garments can be edited in the 2D window, as long as they are kept in Marvelous Designer format (saved and loaded as .Zpac or .Zprj project files). But Marvelous Designer also allows simulation, without editing, of external meshes and 3D objects through "Import/Add OBJ to Garment" option first introduced in the Marvelous Designer 5.

Tools:

While working with your design inside the Marvelous Designer you will be introduced to the

extensive set of tools and options, provided to make the work as easy as possible. These are all enhanced by being reasonable logical and reinforced by real time feedback. The 2D window is equipped with Bezier curves very much like with those found in vector programs such are Adobe Illustrator, Inkscape, Photoshop and GIMP. These enable the quick drawing of accurate geometrical shapes (the Circle, Rectangle, Polygon are all on offer, as drawing shapes and internal shapes) as well as helping with options like Pleats Folding, Pleats Sewing, and 'Steam' where shapes are created are connected together using Segment or Free Sewing by connecting edges and segments, automatically visible in 3D window:



More options for cloth manipulation include garment interaction with the avatar in the scene (Pinning, Tacking, Piping), and many more, but most importantly accurate and fast simulation in real time, where Collision and Particle Distance (thickness of the mesh geometry) settings can be directly manipulated from the side menu options.

Last, but not the least, Marvelous Designer comes with numerous Physical Property Presets. These range from thick materials like denim and leather to soft materials like polyester and silk, and these play an important role in how garment will behave upon simulation. Texturing and adding materials for a realistic look then requires as little as adding a seamless tiling texture to the pattern, the parts or to the garment in whole.

Options and resources:

Now this is all well and good, and it's impossible not to like the program — but where does the new user start creating? It's obvious from the very first look at the software that that Marvelous Designer's '3D sewing' originates from traditional sewing methods, in which case the search for traditional 2D sewing patterns is a logical way to go. This type of flat cut-out patterns can be found for low prices and are often even free inside magazines or at sewing websites.

You may also find vintage paper patterns from the 1950s—1980s in charity shops (thrift stores) and on Ebay, usually at fairly affordable prices. Once you have a pattern it can be easily traced and then projected into the MD 2D window, by tracing the original lines with available drawing tools with segment and free sewing.

Aside from traditional inspiration and resources, in the MD official community forum you can find wide variety of ideas and free pattern downloads, as well as the store's free items along with the paid ones.

Where MD seems to finds most use for individuals is among advanced users of Poser and DAZ Studio. Zbrush is probably the most popular, though, thanks to the easy export/ import options. MD garments in Zbrush can speedily become hyper-realistic, and as such it's almost easier to create a full clothing presentation in 3D than to make traditional sketches and presentations made with real life clothing and fabrics!

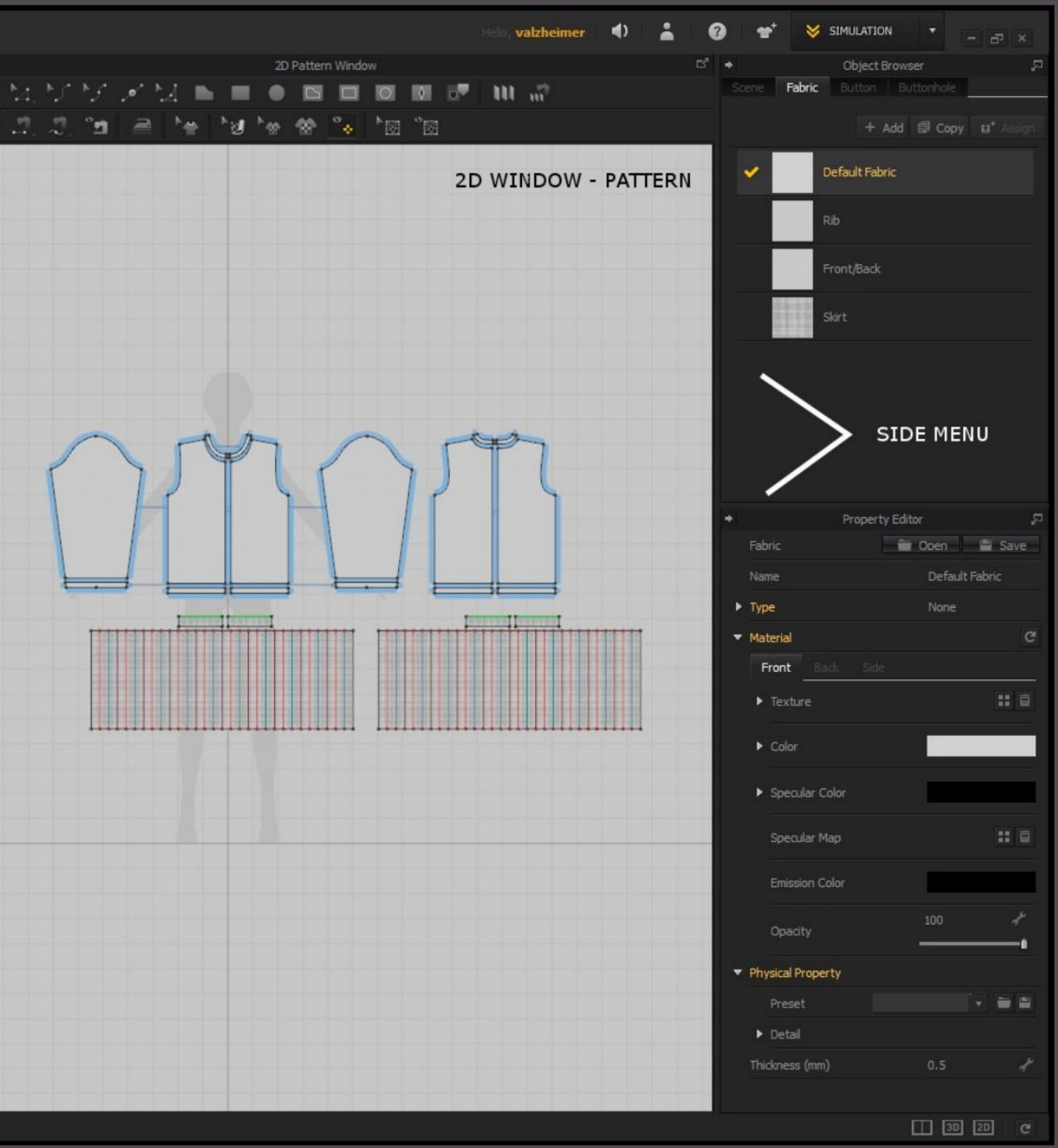
With DAZ Studio and Poser the dynamic clothing options offered by MD open up the possibility of making 3D draped garments without the need for rigging. As such MD makes a great starting point for creating highly detailed and realistic clothing in a very short time and with no need of too much experience in modeling.

For example, on the right is seen is a Marvelous Designer design I created specifically for Daz Studio and a Genesis base model, which was easily imported as a static posed avatar through the Import .OBJ function:

Picture: Verica's own promo render for Verica's 2017 'Cyber Street Wear'. Inset: the design in the MD 6.5 user interface.

CLO & Marvelous Designer: Developed in South Korea by Seungwoo Oh's CLO Virtual Fashion company, Marvelous Designer is software for 3D clothes modelling and layering. First introduced in 2012, MD aims to offer professional-grade rendering and quick-click templates which take the pain out of complex clothing simulations.

The modeling tools, while advanced, are fairly easy to learn the basics of. The software offers a mix-and-match layering system that can mimic all types of cloth variations, and various shortcuts that help creators leap over the tedious initial modeling stages of making clothing. 2D patterns selected from MD's library or created by other users can then be form-fitted to a 3D model quickly for an appealing and adjustable drape preview. Each pattern is easy to manipulate; giving the designer real-time flexibility

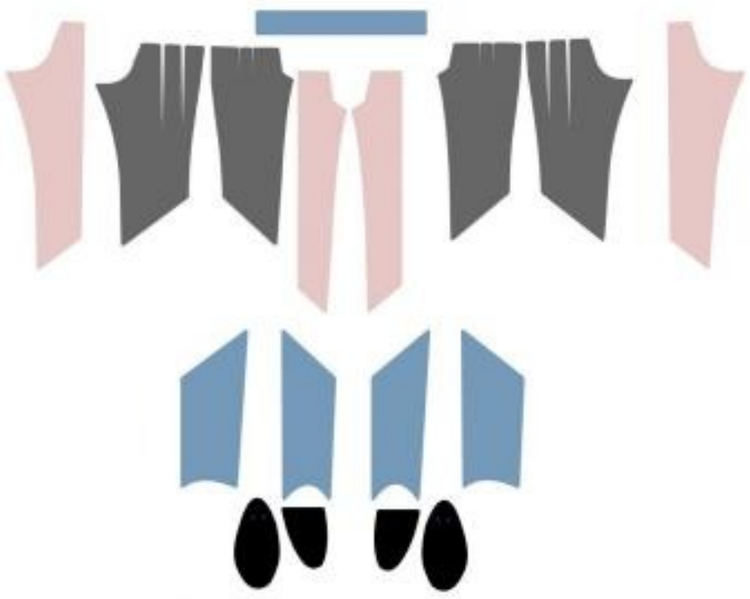


in devising the final look of the garment.

MD allows users to apply different outfits, details and clothing expressions to any piece they've already started. Think the top needs to lose the ruffles? Or maybe needs a new pattern? That's easy to change in MD, requiring no new modelling, backtracking, or starting over. This versatility around new ideas helps designers focus their attention on patterns and form rather than detail sculpting and do-overs.

Marvelous Designer is primarily used in CG, animation and games. CLO also develops similar software called **CLO Atelier**, which is geared to the needs of smaller fashion designers producing real-world garments for sewing shop production. CLO Atelier is for students, freelancers, and fashion companies with 30 or less employees.

MD export then provides quality choices for output — such as between triangles and quad geometry, dividing surfaces automatically per pattern as drawn in 2D window inside the application — thus giving many choices for use of texturing, for an example offering differently textured variants of the same garment as MATs inside DAZ Studio:



Further, MD will export all materials from the current design along with the UV projection, straight from the 2D pattern window. This makes things much quicker compared to creating all the UV's and textures in an external application.

The choice of the export formats — most popular probably being .OBJ — makes your MD designs perfectly usable and importable to any render engine, from DAZ Studio's Iray and 3Delight, Poser 11's Superfly and Firefly. Or Octane, Keyshot, and various other engines that can be integrated with Zbrush. Of course MD output can also work with other software such as 3DS Max, Maya, Lightwave, Vue and similar professional studio 3D software packages.

Learning more:

Once the basics of the UI, workflow and pipeline have been mastered, there will still be many aspects of MD left to learn. To help users with this there are numerous video tutorials on YouTube, along with a Marvelous Designer official YouTube channel with very informative One-Minute Tips and Tricks. This also has full lessons created by the developers of the program themselves!

Other websites to look at are Fearless Makers and CGElves for free tips and resources, and forums like Marvelous Designer Help. Of course, for instant response the Facebook groups and DeviantArt are also useful sources of community and support.

What's new in MD 6.5?:

In April 2017 the new Marvelous Designer 6.5 added brand new and long requested features and upgrades of the program. The most popular being the ability to make Buttons inside MD. The new Seam Taping reinforces the edges of the pattern, as uses can now partially manipulate the thickness of fabric with options like Skive and Bond. The new Unified Texture — under UV Coordinates during export — now allows direct export of texture and UVs as seen in our 2D pattern window. Patterns have experienced further evolution with the option to match up, merge, simultaneous edit of multiple patterns as instances. Smart Arrangement maintains the 3D state of the draped garment, while rearranging pattern position, without having to redo the

Pictures: promo renders for Verica's 2017 'Cyber Street Wear' set. Created from scratch in Marvelous Designer on the Genesis 3 Female. Exported to DAZ Studio as 3-part base mesh (jacket, shirt and pants) and with four morph targets for each pose and then rendered in Iray using Verica's own Iray shaders "Fabric Factory" and Satin shaders by Fabiana.

simulation from start to see the changes made. 2D improvements includes 3D manipulation/graphic transform 'in 3D space' over the pattern, enhanced guides, and optimization of the Bezier curves in the 2D pattern window.

It's clear that MD's developers have listened to the community suggestions, and there's now "a whole new wishing well" into which users can throw ideas for new improvements in version 7.0. But encouraging the community doesn't stop there, as MD rewards the best of design with a slot in the community gallery, and the best of these are then featured on their main page and in their gallery 'showcase'.

Conclusion:

MD is intuitive software which can be learned quickly, and it will also give very satisfying results. It offers a wealth of options for 3D artists and designers, and the user community is an endless resource of tips, tricks and newly-found shortcuts. MD is an inspiring and even addictive software, but there is still room for development and improvement.

The current assumption is that we will see Marvelous Designer 7 released at the end of 2017 or the beginning of 2018. Users are currently hoping that version 7.0 will have direct import of 2D patterns, and maybe a long requested plug-in that would integrate sewing directly with 3D programs through the MD interface. Tidying up the quad geometry even further is also a desirable feature.

But even without such features, new users should not put off diving in and enjoying this polished and dependable software in its current 6.5 version.

Verica Hupe (aka 'VAlzheimer', seen right) is an accomplished 3D Artist, Daz 3D Published Artist and 3D Content Creator.

Verica is online at:

http://valzheimer.info
http://valzheimer.deviantart.com/
https://valzheimer.artstation.com/
https://www.youtube.com/channel/..

Picture (right): Personal artwork created with Daz Studio and Octane Render plugin, mainly for use as the VAlzheimer Studio ID and Verica's profile picture around the Web. The 'Faith' character is Verica's own and is based on the Genesis 3 Female. Cutie Pie Cap is by Lilflame and NemesisT at Renderosity; the Iconic Outfit is by Mada and Shana's Soulmate at the Daz 3D Store.

octane render
"Bad Habits II" ©2016 volzheimer.info

JEPE

Jepe ('Jepegraphics') is a well-established vendor of content for Poser and DAZ Studio. We talk about how he makes and sells his best-selling 'digital cloth' products.

DAL: Jepe, welcome to *Digital Art Live* magazine. This is our special 'digital clothes' issue, and as you're a leading DAZ vendor in that regard, we thought you'd be perfect for an interview.

JG: Glad to be here, thanks for the invitation.

DAL: How long have you been interested in 3D? And how did the interest begin? I suspect it's been a while, and began with Poser, as I read somewhere about "Jepe's Movie Props2 for Poser5 - The Space Edition." And a *Babylon 5*-style "Living SpaceShip" for Poser 5 with an animated texture? Was that from the same Jepe?

JG: */Laughter/* Yes, that was me. It feel like a hundred years ago, already. My interest in 2D/3D applications began in the late 1990s, I got Bryce, the vintage 3D landscape generator on a CD-Rom as a gift from a friend — I was instantly fascinated. The "human" element in those Bryce landscape scenes I then could create, were the early Poser (Poser 1 to 2) figures with reflecting metal as skin. I thought that was cool. I remember printing those images as covers for custom music CDs, which was a hobby of mine at that time.

But Bryce also taught me to work with alpha planes, 2D image planes with transparency channel. Billboards, for special effects like smoke or fire, applications like Bryce and Poser had no particle system to have such effects in the scene.

At one time I bought Wondertouch's Illusion, a 2D particle effects generator and made my first products, Alpha-Packs — images with alpha channel to import into Poser or Bryce.

Picture: "V6 Blue Goddess 02".

'JEPE'

GERMANY

DAZ STUDIO | PHOTOSHOP

WEB

That led to my Special Effect Props for Poser (Smoke, Fire, Spellcasters, Bolts and similar light effects) and then to my Movie Props with animated versions of those effects which had become possible with Poser 5. It really was fun to be able to have a space ship with animated textures right within Poser. Kind of funny that those 2D Special Effect HQ Props are still one of my biggest lines of products in my current DAZ store, upgraded in quality and quantity of course and ready for Nvidia's Iray Renderer.

DAL: So you started to create contents for distribution qa while ago now. How have you seen things change? Both creatively, and also in terms of the market and its demands.

JG: Things have not changed *that* much over the years, actually. Unfortunately new and faster hardware and software is not automatically followed by a higher standard in quality for store products. Of course there are a lot more people trying to sell 3D content nowadays, and because of that there has been some dilution of quality. Quantity, aiming at the mainstream taste, is actually saturating the market. Creative, individual, high quality content that takes time and effort in production is buried under too fast.

DAL: Yes, that's true. Each month there's lot of very nice quality, but it does tend to get buried. How were you trained?

JG: I decided to get a steady foundation, by studying the basics of a graphic artist like art history, photography, painting, composition, layout, typography and so much more. I worked as a Media Designer for Digital and Print Media for more than three years, including practical work in an Advertising Agency in Hamburg/ Germany, before I decided to be a full time 3D content creator.

DAL: What are your top three tips on 'things to avoid' when making and selling content?

JG: I never would start without proper and intense research! Study the market and see what you can do to add something to it. Make sure that your idea is unique and that you're able to be better, in one or more ways, than the competitors. You will always have competitors, but don't be the copycat.

DAL: How do you find the promotion side of things?

JG: Advertising is as important as the content itself, without good promo imagery it is not easy to sell something. The best way is to have an active gallery in a community where you can show more than in the shop alone. Give your images a meaning, tell a story with it, be expressive, be inspiring.

DAL: Good advice. You currently sell on the DAZ Store, I see. Specifically your main line is in poses + packs of shiny fabrics that can drape and float over characters. The current packs followed on from your earlier WonderSheetZ and BeddingZ packs. Could you talk us through how you went about making and promoting your Shiny SheetZ packs for G3F and G3M?

JG: Shiny SheetZ is now a stand-alone line of products that started back in late 2013 as a collaboration work between my good friend Vashek Podvala from Sweden, V3Digitimes from France and myself in Germany. Vashek did the first poses for Michael4-Victoria 4, I refined them and created the sheets in Marvelous Designer and brought them to Poser and DAZ Studio. V3Digitimes tailored a custom 3Delight shader for DAZ Studio that included special reflection channels to make the sheets shiny.

Shiny SheetZ are not 3D clothes in the usual sense, not conforming, not dynamic. They drape in natural folds for different fabric properties, created in Marvelous Designer's simulation environment with high, low or no gravity and wind force, for a specific figure and figure pose. A specialty from the beginning is that the SheetZ have a front and back side that can be textured independently. This results in almost unlimited variations of colouring and shading under different lighting conditions together with Transparency, Translucency, Refraction and Subsurface Scattering we now have with our wonderful Nvidia Iray Render Engine in DAZ Studio 4.9.

DAL: Fantastic. Were you pleased with the sales from your new flagship content? I guess you were, as I see there was a Shiny SheetZ II, a little later. And will you be making a similar pack

Picture: "Golden Ivy".

for the new G8F, and also the G8M Mike when it's released in the Autumn of 2017?

JG: Shiny SheetZ II for the Genesis 3 Male base was just released a few days back. Right now I'm still undecided what comes next, to be honest. WonderSheetZ or Shiny SheetZ for Victoria 8 is an option!

DAL: Shiny SheetZ are certainly very desirable looking content packs. How are the render times, though — on Shiny SheetZ + a G3 character in iRay at, say, 2400px tall?

JG: Under base conditions, with default sunlight or default HDRI it's less than an hour. It depends of course on what hardware you're rendering with, the kind of environment and lighting you use and the features of the shaders — translucency, refraction and SSS always need their time to get fully clear. And it so so much worth the wait, if you ask me! You can get rid of it with simple plain shaders and have an image in 5 minutes, but is that something you're really would be after?

DAL: Indeed. And you've also made custom characters?

JG: Yes, so another possibility for store content would be to start with character creation again. The creation of DAZ's Elite Texture "Stratton" in 2009 was a far-reaching experience for me and influenced all my following work and products. Although I'm not sure if customers would even be able to appreciate individual characters of mine with custom made, photographed skin and morphs. As character creation is relatively cheap 'mass ware' nowadays, made out of slightly altered merchant resources with mirrored limbs and a generic overall look. Let's see what the future brings.

DAL: Your 'Jepe's Body Jewels 3' also looks like it will interest our readers [show picture], being science fiction. I'm guessing it was made with Marvelous Designer?

JG: No. My Body Jewels are a 'second skin' geometry layer based on transparency and high resolution displacement maps, which can take every possible shader. For Poser it is based on a 2nd skin script by Dimension3D that works for every figure and prop, for DAZ Studio we have the Geometry Shell now.

DAL: You've also done some intensive work on male skin, and male erotica characters JURG and JARG. I imagine that has been quite successful too, since I read that you work as a "Premier Artist for the Pay Gallery at Renderotica". We don't really cover that aspect of the Poser/DAZ world here at *Digital Art Live* — but just tell us about the business angles on that, if you're able to, please? I imagine, for instance, that it helps to support your other creative work? What's the ratio, for instance? Is it — say — 5:1 in terms of income from Renderotica vs the DAZ Store, or is it the other way around, or just an even 1:1? I appreciate you may not want to talk about such details, and that's fine if you don't — but I'm curious about what sells and I'm sure our readers will be too.

JG: It's relatively simple to explain. Firstly you can't sell everything everywhere, and some stuff of an 'adult' nature is simply not allowed to be brokered as a stand-alone item at DAZ3D. Secondly, it's not a question of what sells or not, it's more about your own business and creative priorities, your personal preferences and if you have enough time to accomplish all that. Business-wise you can't ignore the chance to fill existing content gaps, if it's in line with your own interests and abilities. And to put your own stamp on it and add variety and individuality, which is sorely needed in the 3D character world, especially for those that work with ready-made content for Poser or DAZ Studio. My stuff in that line is a bit older already so I can't talk about numbers, but "Adult" vs. "Family Friendly" is usually more than 20:1.

DAL: Wow. And you also do personal work in the male pinup line, for friends. For instance, a 100-page printed book made for your friends, with the best of your portraits. They must be very happy when they open their Christmas presents!

JG: The book project last year was clearly an experiment because my favourite print company had a sale for image books – and I thought: "Take the chance to see some of your works in such a medium!" Ha! — it was more work than expected, I had to re-render a lot of my images

Picture: "Ralph".

in higher resolution. You maybe can imagine when an artist has to redo his own work, usually this ends in completely rebuilt or new scenes and images. But as the books arrived finally, it was so worth the additional work and effort. This year it will be a calendar, 12 pages and a cover.

DAL: Sounds good. What are three of your personal favourite images you have created? What did you learn from creating them and what inspired you to create them?

JG: The first image I created that had a big impact on my life as a becoming an artist was a Bryce abstract called "Green Insanity". It was one of the first images I ever posted in the galleries of 3D Commune and Renderosity back in 2001. I followed an image tutorial and was able to create something wondrous, astonishing and unique with the help of my computer machine. You see what it taught me – when I can do it once, I can do it a second time and a third and so on. With those kind of images I found a way to express myself artistically, but I also saw that I could build and create something that is so totally unique that no one in the world could do the same, similar for sure, but never the same. The second image was "A Touch Of Light", also a Bryce abstract I made in April 2003. It was the first image I sent to a printing company to have it as a big panorama poster on a wall. It still is, framed now, hanging right above my two monitors in my studio. And then… hmmm… it gets difficult to name a third image. I think that my favourite is always the one rendering in the background while I do other work, like posting something on my Facebook page or answering this interview for instance!

DAL: Tell us about your studio, please. The setup, the kit you have. Also your view out the window, and the place you live in. Just so that readers can get a sense of where you are.

JG: For more than 11 years now, I've lived in a small town with 3,000 inhabitants in the rural landscape around Hanover in Germany. I share a house with my older sister and two other roommates, we have a big garden, a pool and two little dogs. My 'studio' is actually my main living room, but I have a big desk, two 24" monitors and a Windows 10 PC with water-cooled I7 Quad Core 3,50 GHz processor, 512 GB SSD main drive and several 2, 4, 5 and 6 TB internal and external SATA hard drives for backups, 32GB RAM and since mid 2015 an Nvidia TitanX graphics card that handles Iray absolutely fabulous – the best investment I made for my business.

Although my actual Constellation PC is about two years old now, it still is good for all tasks. But it would be cool of course to have a new machine in early 2018, that depends on how successful my items in the DAZ store will be. Let's hope for the best!

DAL: Do you favour a tidy studio, or messy studio? Cats, dogs?

JG: My door to my room is never closed, we often eat here or watch TV together. When I need to concentrate on things, I do that at night, because I love to work at night when all the others are sleeping, especially the dogs.

DAL: I see. Are you inspired, creatively, by any of your local landscapes?

JG: No, not at all.

DAL: Oh, it's *that* dull there. Right, ok what about fashion design? Do you follow the current fashion world in any way? Or take inspiration from historical fashions?

JG: Creating the complete morphing bed and beddings for my "BeddingZ Gothic Edition" come to mind there. I had to do intense research for Gothic and Victorian inspired architecture, furniture, beds and beddings, also to be able to create relatively authentic fabrics like satin and velvet shaders with Victorian and Gothic colours and patterns. This stage was especially fun because I encountered so many new things we don't have in 3D yet. Creating this content, and to set this all in scene with poses for our popular DAZ males and females, was and is one of my all time favourite projects for now!

DAL: What science fiction stories do you enjoy? Are you still a fellow fan of the great *Babylon 5*?

JG: Yes of course, *Babylon 5* is still one of my favourite SF stories, I also love all the *Star Trek* series and movies, I follow *Arrow*, *Flash* and also

Picture: "V7 with humming bird".

jeppe 1/2017

Marvel's *Agents of* Shield or *Vampire Diaries* - all of my 3D male characters for instance are inspired by actors.

DAL: Who are your favourite artists, both from the past and the present?

JG: Anne Rice is one of my all time favourites, can't wait for her next book to hit the German market or to watch episodes of a series based and inspired by her characters that is in early planning stages as far as I know. Most of her books and novels I've read twice and even more.

DAL: What creative projects do you have planned? Perhaps elemental body jewels? Frost, fire, cobwebs, perhaps — that sort...

JG: Now you gave me an idea! But my projects usually start to evolve from a special need for something that I am then able to provide a solution for. I try to stay curious for all the new things the technology offers, but I hope I'm not a slave of it. I follow tutorials or explore things on my own to refine and to widen my artistic and handwork skills. I have done this for more than 20 years now, I'm confident that it will go on for while, even though I don't know yet what exactly will come. :)

DAL: What would you like to see in a future DAZ Studio 8?

JG: I already would be glad if all the various features would work properly in the current

Pictures: "G2F Kat Devil"; "DM Clock + Lionel 01"; "Orso Mushrooms 02".

version! /*Laughter*/ But to be serious, modelling tools would be fun, for clothes and for environments or to alter characters, a more complete and easy animation solution for characters, clothes and hair, with a platform to share of course. And an ultra fast and ultra photorealistic, real-time rendering engine.

DAL: Finally, what three tips would give to a young artist just starting out with 3D? I mean generally, creatively — not just in terms of making content for sale at the stores.

JG: As I see it, 3D and computer is 99% "knowing your tools" and 1% creativity. You need passion and patience with yourself, you must train your eyes to see the important things and you must learn to love the details.

Don't rush anything, be precise with expression and body language as characters otherwise can't speak, can't tell their story, they always have one!

DAL: That's great. Thanks very much for this in-depth interview.

JG: It was my pleasure.

Jepe is online at:

http://jepegraphics.deviantart.com/

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Pictures: "MV6 with Body Jewels 3"; "Lookout M7".

GALLERY

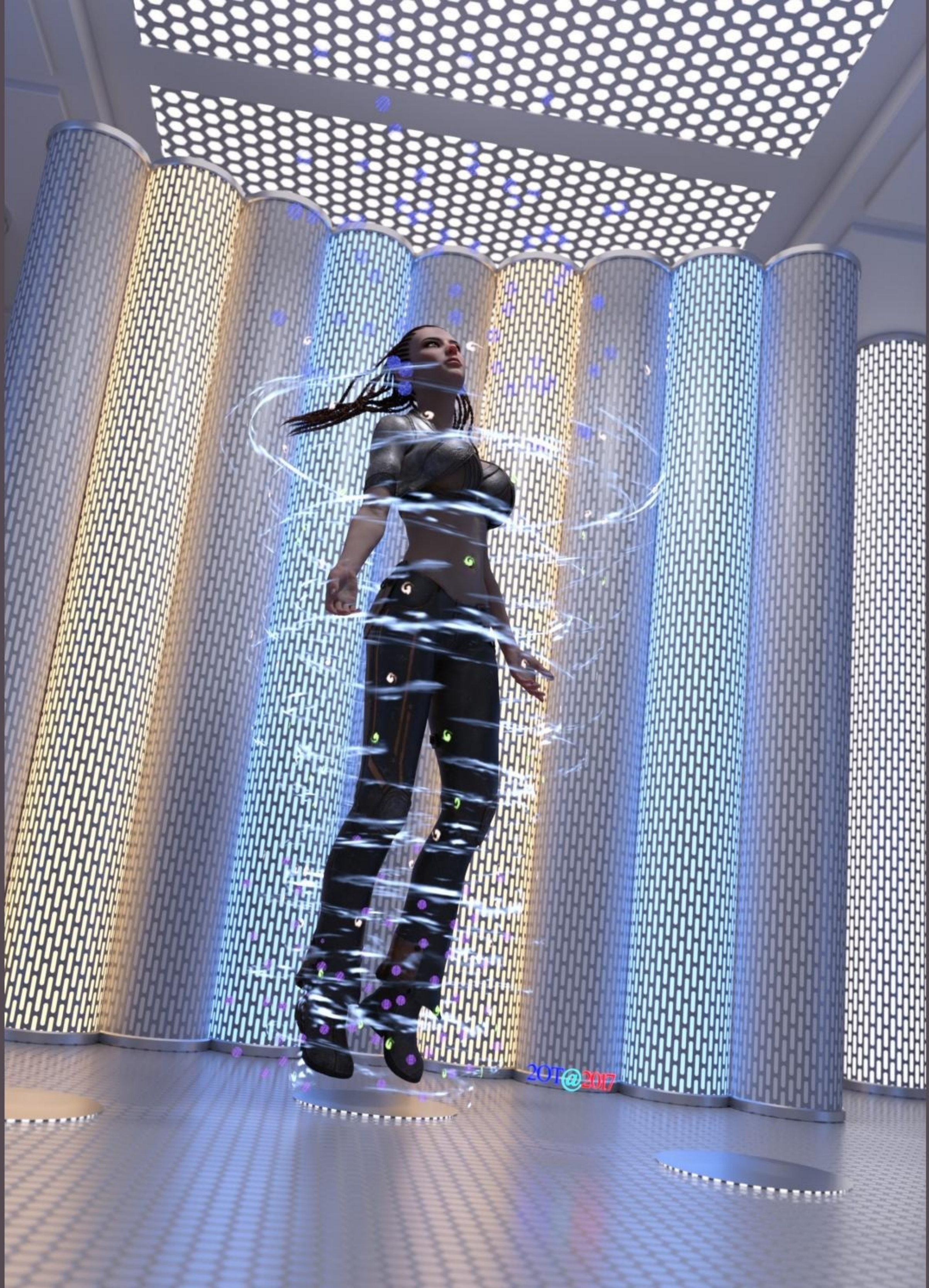
This issue's *Digital Art Live* picture gallery celebrates **future fashion**: dangerous dresses, terrific trainers, floaty frills, cavorting capes, and more!

Pictures: "Dame" by Elena Casagrande; "Yo yo yo hey man" by MizusaSori (Linda S.).

Pictures: "Isador" and "Mena 2" by Mel of BlackTalonArts (see interview, earlier in this issue)

Pictures: "Aiko Lilah"; and "Egypt 01b" by Jepe (see interview, earlier in this issue)

Jepe © 2017


2OT@2017

Pictures: "Saskia WS", DAZ Studio and Iray, by SO2; "View from Above" by Troy Menke.

The Journey
3D CHARACTER ART CHALLE

Pictures: The Journey, Art Challenge. Aiden the Spirit Hunter: "First View" and "Third View" by Safwen Laabadi of Tunisia.

Pictures: "Moon and crow" by James Zapata.

Moon and Crow
jameszapata.com

Pictures: “Eva Space Outfit” by Riluna (Rianne Haak). The outfit was made for Rianne's graduation film, about an interstellar journey to the system Gliese 581; and "Water Dancer" by BohemianHarlot (Jamilah Al-Rahman).

Water Dancer

© Tumblr @ Reborn, BohemianGoddess
http://bohemiangoddessreborn.tumblr.com

Pictures: "Sci fi outfit concept" by Samize; "Bounty Hunter" by Ortsmor.

Digital Art LIVE

Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets

Any movie by Luc Besson (*The Professional* extended / *The Fifth Element* / *Lucy*) is worth a look, and when it's based on the science-fiction comic *Valerian* then it becomes a must-see. First extensively trailed in this magazine back in 2015, this $220 million movie adaptation is now set for U.S. release on 21st July 2017. It reportedly runs well over two hours, and has 2,400 visual FX shots which beautifully depict a space-faring 28th century in a range of icy blues. The movie's storyline seems basic at first glance: the Terran Galactic Empire is a galaxy-spanning civilisation in which technology enables citizens to live a life of leisure, overseen by technocrats and defended by the time-jumping police of the Spatio-Temporal Service; two of their agents are sent to the outer colonies, to investigate reports that... someone is plotting to blow up the Earth. Yawn. But... this is a Besson movie, so we're fairly sure that it won't stay in such a clichéd groove for more than the first ten minutes. If you can't wait, a sneak-peek can be had from the 200-page 'making of' artbook on 23rd June 2017.

IMAGIN

Our pick of the most inspirational art, science and sci-fi. Make your imagination LIVE!

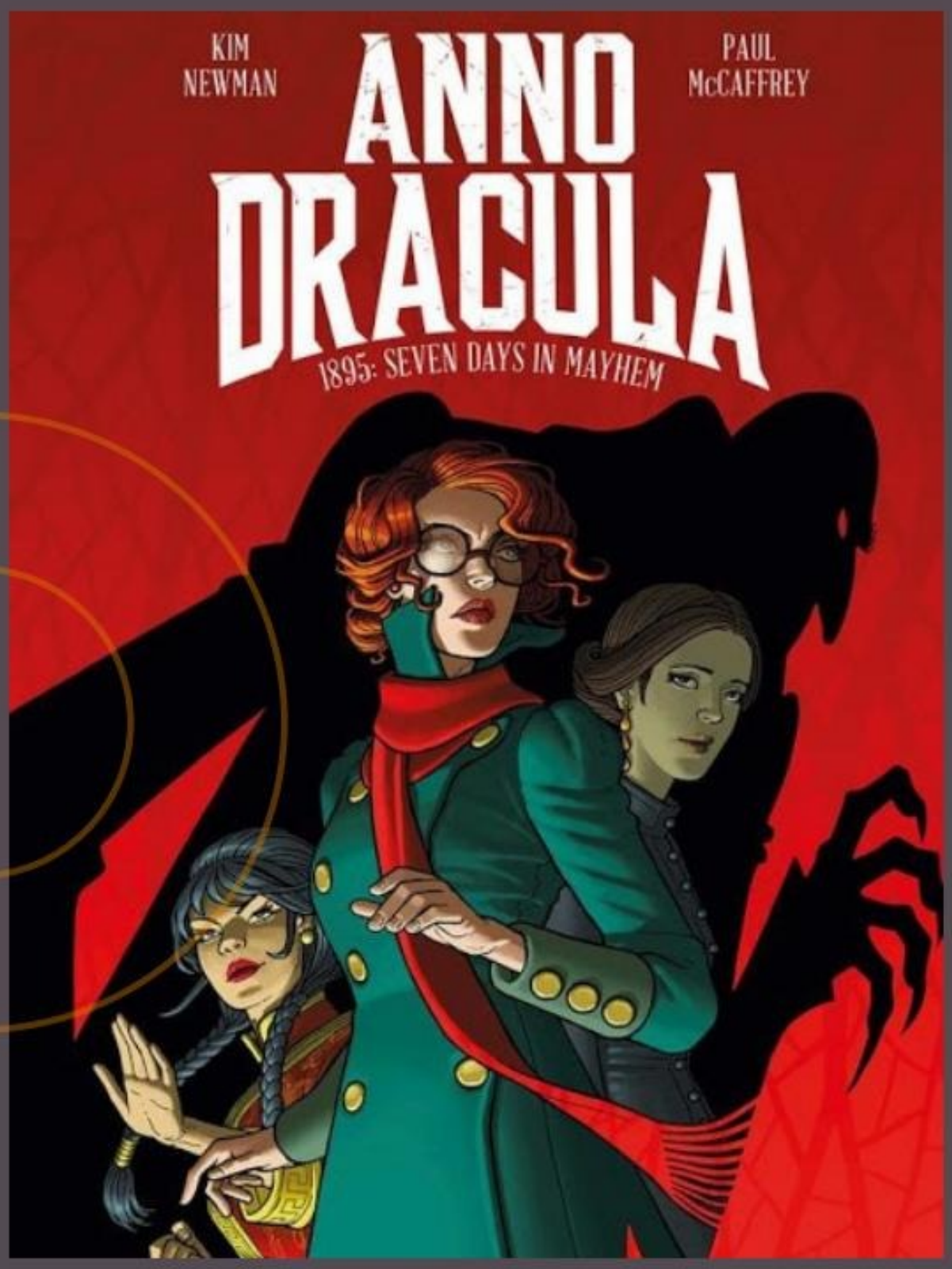
Picture: Promotional picture, with thanks to Lionsgate.

monster
FROM THE PAGES OF
SCREAM!
THE COMPLETE SAGA COLLECTED HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME!
ALAN MOORE ★ JOHN WAGNER ★ ALAN GRANT ★ HEINZL ★ JESUS REDONDO

Treasury of British Comics

Classic 'lost' British comic strips are now set to be reprinted in new editions, following the conclusion of years of approaches and negotiations with the rights holders. *2000AD* owners Rebellion have completed the purchase of the archives of publishers Fleetway and IPC, famous producers of a vast range of weekly British comics from the 1950s through to the 1980s. Rebellion have now started to produce a series of reprints of the best strips, starting with John Wagner's punchy *One-Eyed Jack* series, and 'the British Spider-Man' *The Leopard from Lime Street*. The girls' horror comic *Misty* also has a sampler of the best stories. Alan Moore readers will also be interested in a rare complete Alan Moore horror series, an early work which ran in *Scream!* These new book collections are just the first in an ongoing series of reprints from the vast Fleetway/IPC archives.

https://treasuryofbritishcomics.com/

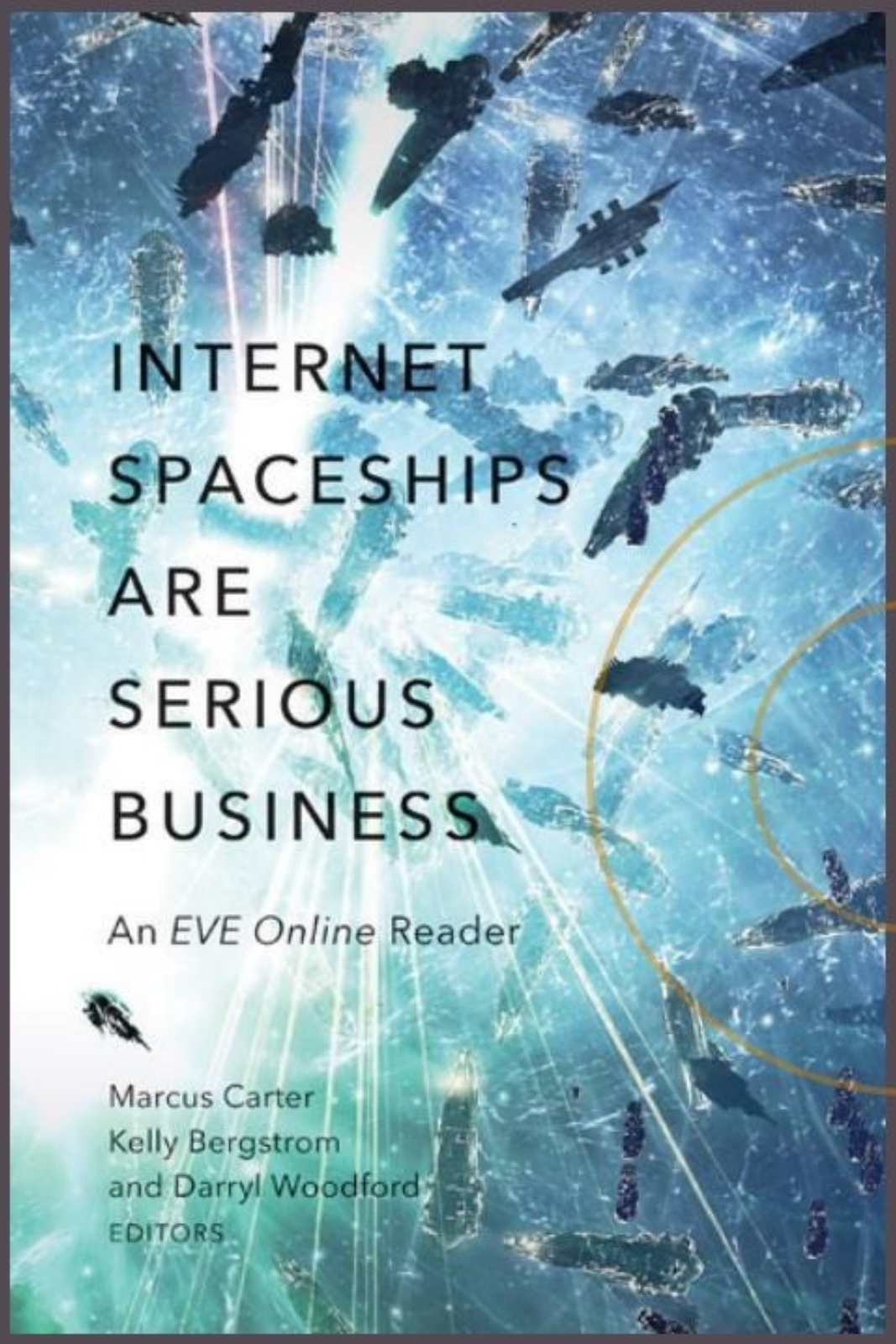


Graphic novel: Anno Dracula 1895

Anno Dracula: 1895: Seven Days in Mayhem (Titan Comics, 2017) is a comic book sequel to novelist Kim Newman's popular 'alternate history' world — in which the famous Dracula (of Bram Stoker's seminal novel) was not stopped. Instead Dracula married Queen Victoria and ushered in an era of vampire domination in Britain. The setting and backstory for *Anno Dracula* were inspired and developed by Neil Gaiman, and then shaped by Kim Newman into a series of award-winning novels and short stories.

The comic's story open one decade after the events in Newman's novel *Anno Dracula*. The large cast and London setting is handled well, and readers new to the alternate London of *Anno Dracula* are not overwhelmed. The fourth comic-book of the *Anno Dracula 1895* series is set for June 2017, and then the collected 'trade paperback' graphic novel seems likely to appear in late 2017 or early 2018.

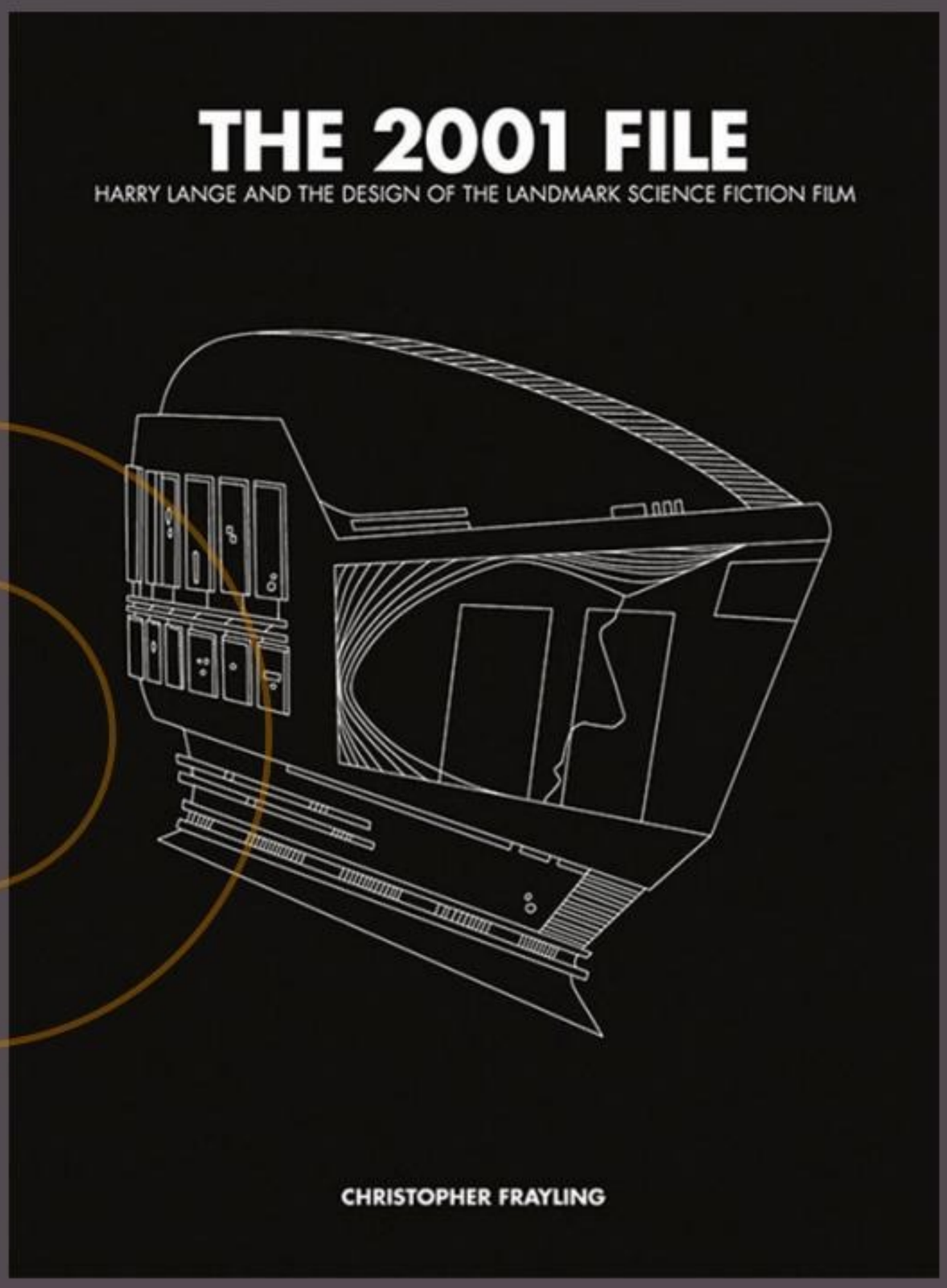
https://titan-comics.com/



Book: Internet Spaceships

EVE Online is a famous ongoing multiplayer science-fiction space videogame. But a relatively easy *Mass Effect* game it is not. *EVE* is famously difficult and rigourous, requiring vast amounts of time and effort to play and master it. This new $23 paperback book by The University of Minnesota is the first major collection of writing on this difficult but beloved game. The fifteen essays are from a mix of developers, players, academics and independent scholars. The authors were told to try to write in accessible plain English, where possible. The book gives an overview of the single-server game world, its history and difficulty; the game's projection of humanity's future and future-economy in space; the nature of warfare and espionage play in the game; CCP Games' relationship management with their players, and the players' relationships with each other.

http://www.upress.umn.edu/



Book: The 2001 File

The scholar Sir Christopher Frayling made his name as an expert on the fictional villain Fu-Manchu, but his latest lavishly illustrated book *The 2001 File* (2015) celebrates the production design of the famous science fiction movie *2001*. The focus is on Harry Lange, a NASA engineer who became Kubrick's film designer on his seminal science fiction adaptation of Arthur C. Clarke's novel. Lange designed and illustrated for the space vehicles, environments and space suits in *2001*, while his business partner Fred Ordway liased with a network of corporate and government space organisations — in order to clear the designs for public showing. Lange would remain in the movie industry and in science fiction, going on to work on the *Star Wars* films. Fraying had free access to Lange's archive featuring original concept sketches, designs, correspondence and on set photographs — and many of these appear in this lavish oversize book.

http://www.reelartpress.com/

Frederic Remington at the Met

Opens 3rd July 2017, New York

Before Frank Frazetta there was Frederic Remington (1861–1909), artistic chronicler of the American West. His legacy will be presented in a small but powerful show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. As the publishing industry was based in New York, Remington lived and worked on the East Coast. But he traveled extensively as America's western frontier expanded and the railroads struck out into the new-made territories. His insightful first-hand portrayals of remote trappers and Indians, cavalry and scouts, and archetypal cowboys and their horses, remain some of our most iconic and enduring images of the Old West.

http://www.metmuseum.org/

Pictures, from left, across double-page spread:

Detail of a painting by Frederic Remington.

Tony DiTerlizzi, detail from cover illustration for *The Monster's Ring* (2002).

Interior of the exhibition space at Minalima.

Visitors encounter a Takashi Murakami painting.

Never Abandon Imagination

Opens 11th Nov, New England, USA

'Never Abandon Imagination: The Fantastical Art of Tony DiTerlizzi' is a major retrospective exhibition of 200 works by the bestselling author and illustrator. The show opens at the Norman Rockwell Museum in New England on 11th November 2017, and runs until 28th May 2018. Best known for his multi-million bestselling book series *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, Tony DiTerlizzi is a masterful character artist, portraying children, fairies, trolls, goblins, and sprites. DiTerlizzi characters have the flair and charm of Jim Henson's puppets, are portrayed in a style reminiscent of Arthur Rackham, and are set in a world where the landscape and ecosystem is as vividly depicted as a Miyazaki film.

Sponsored by Disney, the show's 200 works will range from his early work on *Dungeons and Dragons* and *Magic: The Gathering*, through *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, to works such as *Kenny and the Dragon*; *The Spider and the Fly*; *The Story of Diva and Flea*, and *The WondLa Trilogy*.

http://www.nrm.org/

House of Minalima

Summer 2017 onwards, London

The House of MinaLima is an innovative blend of shop and gallery in Soho, London. It showcases fifteen years of creative collaboration of graphic design duo Miraphora Mina and Eduardo Lima, founders of MinaLima. As of 2017 their shop now features an impressive three-room / three-floor gallery of their design and graphic work for the major *Harry Potter* film series and the new film *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, shown along with authentic film props. Also on show is their work on a series of illustrated classic fairytale books for publisher Harper Collins. A wealth of small quirky paper items and prints are also on sale in their shop.

The House of MinaLima's opening hours are currently 12 noon until 7pm every day, but visitors should note that at weekends the shop and gallery becomes very crowded with Harry Potter fans and tourists. As such, a visit may work best during a quieter weekday when children will be in school.

http://minalima.com/

Takashi Murakami retrospective

Until 24th September, Chicago

'Takashi Murakami: The Octopus Eats Its Own Leg' is a major new retrospective exhibition at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art. Over 50 of Murakami's famously pop-surreal artworks will be on show, spanning both his paintings and sculptures. Included are many works that have never been seen before in North America. The large collection of multi-panel paintings will be shown in a large venue able to do them justice, thus giving visitors a very different experience compared to seeing Murakami's work in a book. The abundance of work on show will also allow visitors to trace the key developments in Murakami's signature themes and motifs. Murakami's more recent work will also be seen, which explores and evoking his personal links with authentic Japanese culture.

After its debut in Chicago this large exhibition will then travel to the Vancouver Art Gallery in Winter 2018, and then on to the Modern Art Museum in Fort Worth during Summer 2018.

https://mcachicago.org/

Back cover:
"Glowy Thing 2"
by Arki.

Are you interested in being interviewed in a future issue of the magazine? Or presenting a webinar for our series? Please send the Web address of your gallery or store, and we'll visit!

paul@digitalartlive.com

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'FANTA-SCI'